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WELDON, N. C., THURSDAY, OCTOBER 29, 1885.

NO. 33.

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RECONCILIATION.

BY E. C. WELDON.

"Happiness?" Margaret repeated, "have you found out then that—'David is innocent'?" she was about to say, conscious that this was the way in which happiness must come to her now, through David, but she hesitated and Mr. Trenton took up the question.

"Yes," he answered, "I have found out, Margaret, the reason for your great likeness to—another Margaret. But sit here," he said, "and I will tell you in a few words there are things that will not bear much talking about, Margaret." He looked at the girl, and seeing that his serious manner had recalled the frightened expression to her face he changed his tone and said more lightly:

"I suppose a man in telling the story of his life should begin at the beginning, which is when and where he was born. Well, I was born in New England more than fifty years ago, in a quiet town, a small, strict and narrow-gaited one. When I got the wild nature I had I do not know, unless I inherited it from some sailor ancestor of which there had been two or three in my mother's family. Whenever I inherited it, it was in me and you can see what the result was. Seeing me so different from their other children my father and mother regarded me as the black sheep of the flock, and not liking this, not liking, indeed, any portion of the dull life, I ran away when I was fourteen years old and worked, at first one thing, then another, until I got on a boat that ran up the Mississippi. I had a genuine sailor's talent for money-making. I have always made money somehow, and so after awhile I became a partner in a boat, and then commenced running one alone, acting as captain, proprietor, mate or in any other capacity that might be necessary."

"There was a planter living on the river named Lewis, and he and I had much talk together. One night I went to his house on business, and there I met his daughter, Margaret," here Mr. Trenton who had hitherto spoken to speak lightly, paused and sat silent and as the firelight shone on his face, Margaret could see that there were tears in the man's dark eyes.

"I have heard people laugh at love at first sight," he continued, after awhile, "but I loved Margaret Lewis the first time my eyes ever rested upon her. There is no need of describing her—she was much like you, but that she was far prettier and younger, and I think now, she must have had a quicker temper and a weaker nature than yours. But I loved her with all my soul, and from that night my business required more and more frequent visits to Mr. Lewis. By degrees I saw that Margaret was glad when I came; then I saw her standing and looking at me, and I got to disquieting as to which one of us had the death stake at the line; but that was killed that day. We were both drunk, I, the drinker of the two, I think, and the quarrel grew fiercer and fiercer, until I snatched up a gun and fired at him, then I heard a cry of 'Great God he's killed him!' that cry sobered me, Margaret sobbed so thoroughly that from then till now I have never tasted liquor, but what does that matter? the cry was true, I had killed my brother, a man's blood was upon my soul forever."

The fire crackled merrily, a gray passing outside the house sang a gay air joyously, but Margaret and Mr. Trenton sat silent and horror-stricken as if the awe of that deed, done so many years ago, were fresh in their hearts. At that moment, Mr. Trenton's best words were doing their work, Margaret felt like the wall of a soul in agony, as in truth they were, and when did Margaret Hamilton hear a cry of distress, that her kind heart did not return a pitying answer? She felt a momentary repugnance to touching Mr. Trenton's hand, feeling that there was blood upon it; but Margaret's was pecuniarily a religion of love, and with the human repulsion, came the thought that Divine blood was shed for this man, as well as for her, and so, drawing close to him, she laid her soft hand gently on his trembling one—"You did not mean to do it," she said, "you were not yourself—you must not blame yourself."

"God bless you for saying that," Mr. Trenton said gratefully, "he that I had killed in his life, I had only my wife had thought like you, how different it might have been! But when you told her of it, she broke out into ravings against me. When they made me go home to get clothes and money then that I might leave the country for a time she refused to see me, and at last, in answer to my agonized pleading, that she would speak only one word of good-bye to me, she slightly opened her door and said in a voice that will be the last thing I forget when I am dying: 'Good-bye and I trust and pray that I may never again look upon the face of my brother's murderer. When she, my wife, said that to me, I was so full, yes, intensely full, from the house, feeling that the case of Cain was upon me, since she could tell me murderer, and having no idea as to go, go, go, as far away as I could from everything I loved or cared for. But the old money-making instinct helped me then, I found work out there in the West, and soon began to grow rich. After three years the bitterness of Margaret's parting grew less to me and the longing to see her, or hear of her grew greater. I wrote twice but no notice was taken of my letters, and so, concluding that my wife still felt as she did when I left her, I made no further efforts to find her. This letter will tell you the rest, Margaret. Take it and read it alone, as I have done."

And placing in her hand the letter and a small gold locket, Mr. Trenton left her, himself too agitated to witness her agitation. Margaret opened the locket to find

IN A PICTURE WHICH SHE RECALLS RECOGNIZING

AS MR. TRENTON WHEN HE WAS YOUNG

AND ON THE OTHER SIDE A GIRL'S FACE, WHICH WAS LIKE HER OWN, EXCEPT AS MR. TRENTON HAD SAID: "IT WAS FAR PRETTIER. BUT MARGARET DID NOT STOP LONG OVER THE LOCKET, WHEN SHE HELD HER FATHER'S LETTER IN HER HAND, AND TAKING UP SHE SAID AS FOLLOWS:

FAIRFAX, N. C., March, 31st 18—

ROBERT TRENTON, ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR:

"To-day I have had an interview with two physicians concerning the state of my health. Their decision has been that there is a serious affection of the heart which may at any moment result fatally. This was not a surprise to me. In the year following my wife's death, while Margaret was at school, I had two attacks, the last of which Dr. H. H. H. informed me that there were unmistakable symptoms of heart-disease. Margaret never told of this, nor is she yet aware of the fact. I have kept the knowledge from her, since it would but cause her anxiety and could serve no good end. Yesterday I had another day of acute pain, and hence I have consulted the physicians, and, thinking that their verdict should determine my course towards myself. What I have decided that course to be, you will see when you read this letter. I offer no apology for withholding the knowledge from you, but I will say that I am now when you see that by withholding it, possibly not a week, certainly not a year, I have kept the sunshine that brightens my days, and which you cannot miss, since you never have been blessed with it. This sentence must appear enigmatical to you, and I take the kindest way for both of us by explaining in as few words as possible.

"As you have probably heard, during your short stay in my night, the cause of my leaving Louisiana where I was born and where I married, for North Carolina, was the fortune left me by my maternal grandfather, who resided here. My wife and I had been married five years before the birth of our first child, who was an infant girl three months old when we started on our long journey to North Carolina.

"The trip, more tiresome in those days as you well know than now, proved too much for our little one, and we were forced to stop at a small town in Alabama because of our babe's falling strength. We had been there but a day when we discovered that there was a lady in the house who was extremely ill and who had with her an infant near the age of our own. My wife soon made her way into the sick lady's room, and during the short moments which she could spare from her own child did all that she could to aid the sick lady with hers. This kindness won the heart and the confidence of the lady and she told my wife her sad story. The portion of it up to the tragic shooting of her only brother you, sir, know better than I can tell you, for you have, perhaps, already suspected that that sick lady was your wife, Margaret Trenton."

"Shortly after your departure Mrs. Trenton discovered what she had but suspected before, that she was to become a mother. She went to live once more with her father and mother both of whom did all in their power to prejudice her against her husband and to induce her not to seek him. But the hand of death was heavy upon the family. Unable to bear the loss of her only son, Mrs. Lewis soon followed him to the grave. Six months after her mother's demise Mrs. Trenton gave birth to a daughter. Mrs. Trenton told my wife, tearfully, that when she looked upon her babe, lying beside her, the sight awoke in her the love for the babe's father which had lain dormant so long. This awakened love grew stronger and stronger during the months when she lay weak and helpless and thought over the happy days they two had spent together. When at length she was able to go out once more, she told these things to her father and besought him to make an effort to find Robert Trenton, whereabouts. This he positively and bitterly refused, and then Mrs. Trenton informed him of her resolution of herself going with her little baby to seek over the world for her husband and her child's father. Entreaties, rewards, threats were unavailing to change this decision and this frail woman and frail child went forth from her father's luxurious home to seek what that father believed, an outrage and a murder. She reached this small town, where we found her, then her weak frame refused longer to sustain the strong spirit, and she sank exhausted. I wrote to her father, but received a reply from his executor, saying that in regard to his daughter's leaving him the old man had made a will disinheriting her and, as if further to complete the dark fate of the family, had but one week after the will was made fallen from a horse and been killed. Mrs. Trenton never lived to hear this. She begged my wife to take care of her little one, placed a few hands the few valuable and small sum of money she possessed, and died the death of a saint, sir, I do believe. Our poor little baby died the next day, and then it was that the other baby, your wife and Margaret Trenton's, sir, saved my child's life and reason. The mother-to-be had kept my wife up until now, caused her after her infant's death to fall into a stupor of grief. Seeing that this old nurse brought the world into my mother's desolate, little creature that lay in the next room, and placed it on my wife's lap. She snatched it to her bosom, she wept and sobbed over it, she nursed it from her breasts, and looking at me with her eyes full of entreaty she said, 'Let us keep this for our sakes, James. No one need ever know. They were both girls and Margaret is the name for this one too. And James, I need it and it needs me.'

I saw that she was right. I was convinced that Trenton was a reckless drunkard, and above all I saw that my wife needed this interest and affection to cheer her abiding heart. We brought the child to North Carolina on our own, we loved it as our own, the love becoming stronger as the little one grew, and as, by degrees we lost hope of other children being born to us."

"Judge if you can of my surprise when on the 7th of this month I found myself face to face with Robert Trenton, with Margaret's father! I came home

while it was yet so early that Mr. Trenton had not been over to see her, as she was sure he would.

"Well, Margaret," he said, when he came an hour later, trembling perceptibly as he spoke, "can I claim my child?"

"Yes, father," she said hoarsely, (what it cost her to say it, Mr. Trenton never knew, otherwise the word would not have thrilled through him as it did.) "But I am not sure you will want me," she continued, "unless I tell you—"

"You could tell me nothing that would prevent my wanting you," he interrupted her to say.

"You think all of—Mr. Cain? Margaretsaid, "while I love him," she held her head up proudly at this. "Will not that make discord between us?"

"Have you promised to marry him?" Mr. Trenton was wholly unprepared for such unmeaning news as this, he already had had his plans for his daughter. But he could not so change and now was to tell her of this foolish fancy, he thought, at least he would not let it come between them.

"No," she said, "because he would not promise until this suspicion of yours, a stain on his name, he says, is removed."

"Then he will never ask her," thought Mr. Trenton, relieved. His relief taking form in his hearty assurance to Margaret that this subject should not separate them.

"Can my child come to me now?" he asked drawing close to her with his face full of yearning tender affection.

Mr. Edgerton had said rightly it was easy for Margaret to love, and seeing the devotion offered her, she, for answer to Mr. Trenton's anxious question put up her lips to be kissed, and the father caught his child close to him, feeling as if he embraced the dead Margaret and the living one together.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

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