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## THE REPORTER.

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### A BLIGHTING SHADOW.

BY CAPTAIN CHARLES HOWARD.

The leafy crown of the nut-brown month lay on the dying year.  
 Mark Haggarth stood in the wood, and amid the falling leaves alone. His right hand held a letter near his face, and his hazel eye flashed the light of passion upon the delicate chirography that beautified the soft pink paper.

"Little letter," he hissed through the long hairs of his auburn moustache, that covered an imperial, "I hate you, and from my heart I curse the hands that sent you on your blighting mission. Cicely," and here his eyes fell to the name appended to the brief communication, "you dare to sign your name in the terms you have signed it in the days gone by—when I was foolish—when I loved you, the journeyman miller's daughter. Perhaps I was happy then—Oscar Bellew tells me I was; but I do not believe it. I was foolish—all my letters to you, Cicely Webster, prove it. First loves are silly affairs at the best; and the present is my second love, and is as strong as the first beneath whose bosoms I stand."

He cast his eyes upward as he finished, and a moment later he had thrust the letter into his pocket.  
 "I'll return to the village now," he said, in an audible tone. "I wonder if she will attend the festivities to-night. Her impudence certainly surpasses her wonted modesty. Cicely was not a forward girl when I knew her; but she has battled with the world since that day, and the inherent purity of her sex has been torn from her heart."

Then Mark Haggarth secured the letter more firmly in his bosom, fearful that it might be lost among the sear and yellow leaves, and buttoned his coat tightly over it. The narrow path into which he stepped led to the busy occidental village of Laceland, and the falling of the leaves enabled him to catch glimpses of the whitened steeps. About the handsome man all was still. In silence the birds seemed to mourn the last days of the year, for they hopped from branch to branch without a chirp, and their little feet shook many a dying leaf to the golden-tinted ground.

Deeply engrossed in thought, Mark Haggarth walked along with bowed head, oblivious to everything occurring about him. He did not hear the foot that broke the brittle leaves before him, nor see the petite possessor of the delicate member.

A beautiful girl, with lustrous blue eyes and a sea of golden hair, was approaching from the village. Her eyes were riveted upon Mark Haggarth, and this is what her lips said as she hurried down the path:

"I'll walk the log and meet him beyond the brook. I knew I would find him somewhere in the woods, and I wonder what he will say when I ask him, for, perhaps, the last time."

There was a tremor, not unburdened with anxiety, in the girl's low tone, and the look which she fastened upon Mark Haggarth told how she loved him.

Between the twin ran a brook whose waters verified the saying that "still waters run deep." Forest Brook, as the stream was called, boasted of a depth almost incredible, and the superstitious denizens of Laceland had learned to look upon it with fear, for innumerable hobgoblin stories were connected with its placid waters, and their weird imaginations had peopled its banks with ghosts and banshees from source to mouth.

Cicely Webster—for the fair girl who was hastening to encounter Mark Haggarth was she of whom he had lately spoken—gained the fallen oak that bridged Forest Brook, before he was made aware of her presence. Then he was called to the knowledge of company by the descent of a piece of bark which Cicely's dress had dragged into the water, and he looked up with a sudden start.

The girl was crossing the creek, and Mark Haggarth, having halted on the opposite bank, was washing her with cold lips, and without a word. There was a world of hatred in his dark eyes. "Mark," she said, when but midway over the brook, "I am so glad that I have found you. I feared that—"

the last word he suddenly gripped her hand.

"Mark, Mark, what do you mean?" she cried, noting the devilish expression that peeped from his eyes. "Surely, Mark, you still love me."

"Love you, Cicely Webster!" and he followed her name with a laugh. "Love you," he repeated, "you, whose dowry is a sack of flour? Girl, you have never thought that I loved you."

"You have told me so. Oh, Mark—"

"You have been dreaming, girl," he interrupted her. "Indeed, you have been dreaming, I say."

"No, no, Mark!"

"Yes, Cicely Webster. Will you not give me up?"

"Give you up, Mark?" and her voice was a wail. "I cannot!"

"You must!" The coldness of steel was in his tone.

"Consider, Mark," she pleaded. "I love only you. I can never love another."

"And I can never marry you!" he said, un pityingly.

A sigh escaped her heart, and while she looked down upon the sleeping water, Mark Haggarth glanced about them. Not a living person was in sight, and the sinking day-god was throwing long shadows from the west. The beautiful shadow of Cicely's face fell upon his bosom, but I ween Mark did not see it.

"Well!" he said, impatiently, calling her eyes back to him—handsomer than ever in the passion that tortured his soul, and in the beginning of the gloaming.

"And why cannot Mark Haggarth keep his word, given long ago under the lindens by the old mill?" she asked, in an altered tone.

"Because he has placed a ring on a hand fairer than Cicely Webster's."

"Oh, Mark Haggarth!" she cried, starting back; but he held her by the wrist. "Years have changed you."

"Yes, they have shown me how foolish I have been. You must give me up. I never loved you, as Heaven is my witness."

"Not until I have sought her out and told her of your heart," she said calmly, but with great determination.

"You will, eh?"

"I will, unless—"

He suddenly released her hand, and the next moment she was tottering over the water! Once she tried to clutch the arm which he outstretched in devilish mockery, and the gleam of his hazel eyes told her that he did not intend to save her.

"Mark, Mark Haggarth!" she cried, in tones of mingled reproach and despair; and with his name on her lips, she fell from the log, and the broken water re-united over her.

"I didn't push her," he said, self-justifiably. "She fell in of her own accord, and Heaven will not hold Mark Haggarth accountable for her end. I wonder why she does not come to the top?" and he looked down upon the waters, which had resumed their wonted tranquility. "Aha! The witches of Forest Brook have taken her to their abode, and by and by Cicely Webster will bewitch shadow as she has bewitched substance."

Despite his learning, his knowledge of the world, Mark Haggarth leaned toward a belief in the supernatural. After a while he crossed to the right bank of the brook, and pursued his way towards Laceland.

Once or twice, perhaps oftener, he thought of Cicely Webster, the girl who, because of the purest love, had refused to give him up. He had taught her to love him, and, true to teachings, she had cherished her heart's adoration when he was false. And when he thought of her he would murmur:

"I didn't push her; she fell in of her own accord!"

Ah! Mark Haggarth, while she tottered on the log you could have saved her, but you would not! And the wages of sin is death!

With a startling look and a wild cry, Mark Haggarth staggered from the spectacle and sank to the floor, like a man killed with horror. There he lay motionless while a thousand people waited for the bridegroom.

True to the life was the mirrored vision. While he gazed upon it, Cicely Webster stood before a happy altar, promising to cherish the noble youth who had heard her groanings beneath the hollow banks of Forest Brook, and rescued her. And she was happy, for she loved him as she had once loved Mark Haggarth.

By and by the impatient Ellen Van Loos sent a message to Mark's room. Opening the door, the messengers found him still on the floor—DEAD!

### Russian Generals.

The Russian Generals in Bulgaria are mainly very old men, who studied the art of war forty and even fifty years ago. They are described by a correspondent of the *Daily News* as men who never look in a book and who rarely read a newspaper, and appear to be utterly oblivious to the march of progress, and of science, especially in the military art. Their whole lives may be said to have been passed in one occupation; their whole minds, whatever they had, concentrated on one object; and that the most trivial to which the human mind can descend—card playing. They have done nothing else, thought of nothing else, for years. Their minds have rusted until they are as dull, as heavy, and as incapable of receiving new impressions as the veriest eld hopper. Called from their card tables by the trumpet of war, they rise, rub their eyes, look around them completely bewildered and as thoroughly out of the current of modern war as if they had been asleep for forty years. Not even Rip Van Winkle, with his rusty gun dropping to pieces after his long sleep, was more bewildered and lost than the majority of these poor old Generals suddenly thrown into the campaign at the head of their brigades, divisions and corps. It may be asked why the Emperor does not send these old dotards back to their card tables and replace them by younger men, and men of talent, of which after all the Russian army is not destitute. The soft heart of the Emperor has much to do in retaining these old incapables in their positions. He cannot bear the idea of depriving an old public servant of his position and thus disgracing him, and so unconsciously prefers to sacrifice the lives of thousands of brave fellows to this misplaced feeling of kindness.

### The Noble Revenge.

The coffin was a plain one—a poor, miserable pine coffin. No flowers on its top, no lining of rose-white satin for the pale brow; no smooth ribbons about the coarse braid. The brown hair was laid decently back, but there was no crimped cap, with its neat tie beneath the chin. The sufferer from cruel poverty smiled in her sleep.

"I want to see my mother," sobbed a poor child, as the city undertaker screwed down the top.

"You can't—get out of the way, boy! Why don't somebody take the brat?"

"Only let me see her one minute," cried the hapless, homeless orphan, clutching the side of the charity box; and, as he gazed into that rough face, anguish tears streamed rapidly down the cheek on which no childish bloom had ever lingered. Oh, it was pitiful to hear him cry, "Only once—let me see my mother only once!"

Quickly and brutally the hard-hearted monster struck the boy away, so that he reeled with the blow. For a moment the boy stood panting with grief and rage; his blue eyes distended, his lips sprang apart, a fire glittering through his tears, as he raised his puny arm, and with a most unchildish accent screamed, "When I'm a man I'll kill you for that!"

There was a coffin and a heap of earth between the mother and the poor, forsaken child, and a monument stronger than granite built in the boy's heart to the memory of a heartless deed.

The court house was crowded to suffocation.

"Does any one appear as this man's counsel?" asked the judge.

There was a silence when he finished, until with his lips tightly pressed together, a look of strange intelligence,

blended with haughty reserve upon his handsome features, a young man stepped forward with a firm tread and kindling eye to plead for the erring and the friendless. He was a stranger, but from his first sentence there was silence.

The splendor of his genius entranced and convinced. The man who could not find a friend was acquitted.

"May God bless you sir, I cannot."

"I want no thanks," replied the stranger, with icy coldness.

"I—I believe you are unknown to me."

"Man! I will refresh your memory. Twenty years ago you struck a broken-hearted boy away from his mother's poor coffin. I was that poor, miserable boy."

The man turned livid. "Have you rescued me, then, to take my life?"

"No, I have a sweeter revenge; I have saved the life of a man whose brutal deed has rankled in my breast for twenty years. Go! and remember the tears of a friendless child."

The man bowed his head in shame, and went out from the presence of a magnanimity as grand to him as incomprehensible, and the noble young lawyer felt God's smile in his soul.

### They All Do It.

There are few books that can boast of as much immorality within a space of four hundred pages as is implied in this little phrase, which has been placarded on the bill-boards and called into the ears of the public for the past two or three weeks. It is the one sentence which takes the courage completely out of youth, searing its conscience as with a red-hot iron, and permitting despair to carry it off bodily into the lowest depths of crime.

"Oh, they all do it; why should not you?" that is the suggestion. "That man lies and cheats, and will commit any crime that the law does not make dangerous. So it is with all of them. There is no use in your trying to be different from other people." That is the way the temptation comes to the young man, thrown on the world with little knowledge of its ways, and perhaps shielded only by the indulgent training of an over-fond mother. "People are grossly immoral. Even temperance advocates get drunk in private; church deacons swindle savings-banks; all you see of morality is but a surface show. Beneath there is concealed wickedness. You will find you must follow the multitude." And the youth, with the pleasure of the world held up before his glowing imagination and full of bodily health, plunges forth with it into what he believes to be "the world."

If the devil had concentrated all his cunning during the centuries which have elapsed since his ejection from Paradise, he could not have produced a more powerful argument with which to conquer the soul of man than this, "They all do it." But, young man, listen. That sentence is a lie—as base and foul a lie as ever was conceived in the mind of man or devil. They don't "all do it."

There are thousands upon thousands of good, pure men and women in this world, bad as it may seem, who are leading upright lives. They believe in a Duty, and in the commands of virtue, and are going along with the happiest results to themselves and their neighbors. There are men who think that they were put in this world, not to gratify their own base appetites, but to be true and noble and high-minded. There are men who would disdain to tell a lie. There are men who would disdain to take an advantage in trade, or to do any other selfish or mean action. There are men who try to be just always, and kindly, both in word and feeling, to all. There are men who lead humble, unpretentious lives, and who, without making it known to the world, are doing a vast amount of good among their fellow-men.

And, strange to say, these men lead very happy lives, and, as a rule, very successful lives. While the unprincipled man may enjoy temporary success, sooner or later he will suffer for his lack of honesty. There are a thousand ways in which virtue avenges herself upon him. In one way or another he gets his deserts. You have youth, you are blessed with health of mind and body. There are plenty of originals around you, it is true. But they are to be pitied, not imitated. Never believe that what some do, all do; but be in your own person a standing example of the falsity of the cry: "They all do it."