

Uncle Terry
By
CHARLES CLARK MUNN
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was setting in the east. He sat down to think. All sound of the ocean was gone, and a stillness that seemed to crawl out of the thicket was around him. He rested a few moments more and then suddenly heard the sound of wheels and presently saw, coming around the curve, an old fashioned carriage, with a driver and two passengers. He looked at the sight, he arose and, holding up his hand as a signal, halted the team. "Excuse me, sir," he said to the man, who eyed him curiously, "but will you tell me where I am?" "Waal," was the answer in a slow drawl, "ye're on Southport Island an' 'bout four miles from the jumptin' off place. Whar might ye be goin'?" Ye looked bushed.

"I am," answered Page, "and badly bushed too. I lost my boat over back here on the shore and have had a cheerful time among the Mohawk briars. I belong to a yacht that is anchored in a cove of this island. I can't tell where, and if you will take me to her I'll pay you well."

The man in the wagon laughed. "Say, stranger," he observed with a chuckle, "you 'mind me o' the fellow that got full an' wandered round for a spell till he fetched up to a house an' sed to the man that cum to the door, 'If you will tell me who I am or whar I am or whar I want ter go I'll give ye a dollar.'"

Page had to laugh in spite of his plight, for the humorous twinkle in the old man's eyes as he uttered his joke was infectious.

"I'd like ter 'commodate ye," he added, "but as I'm carryin' Uncle Sam's mail an' must git home an' tend the light, an' ye don't know whar ye want ter go, ye best jump in an' go down to Saint's Rest, whar I live, an' in the mornin' we'll try an' hunt up yer boat."

It seemed the only thing to do, and Albert availed himself of the chance. "Can you tell the spot where you found me?" he said to the man as they started on. "I'd like to go back there tomorrow and find my cushions."

"Waal," was the answer, "as I've drive over this road twice a day for nigh on to thirty year, I'm tolerable familiar with it. My name's Terry, an' I'm keeper o' the light at the Cape an' carry the mail to sorter piece out on. Who might ye be?"

"My name's Page, and I'm from Boston, and a lawyer by profession," replied Albert.

Uncle Terry eyed him rather sharply. "I wouldn't 'n' took ye for one," he said. "Ye look too honest. I ain't much stuck on lawyers," he added with a chuckle. "I've had 'perience with 'em. One o' 'em sold me a hole in the ground once, an' it cost me the hull o' twenty year's savin's! Ye'll 'seuse me fer bein' blunt—It's my nature."

"Oh, I don't mind," responded Albert laughing. "But you mustn't judge us all by one rascal."

They drove on, and as they jogged up and down the sharp hills he caught sight here and there of the ocean, and alongside the road, which consisted of two ruts, a path and two grass grown ridges, he saw wild roses in endless profusion. On either hand was an interminable thicket. In the little valleys grew masses of rank ferns and on the ridges, interspersed between

the wild roses, clusters of red bunchberries. The sun was almost down when they reached the top of a long hill and he saw at its foot a small harbor connected with the ocean by a narrow inlet and around it a dozen or more brown houses. Beyond was a tangle of rocks and, rising above them, the top of a white lighthouse. Uncle Terry, who had kept up a running fire of questions all the time, halted the horse and said:

"Ye can now take yer first look at Saint's Rest, otherwise known as the Cape. We ketch some lobsters an' fish here an' hev prayer meetin's once a week."

Then he chattered to the horse, and they rattled down the hill to a small store, where he left a mail pouch and then followed a winding road between the scattered houses and out to the point, where stood a neat white dwelling close beside a lighthouse.

"I'll take ye into the house," said Uncle Terry as the two alighted, "an' tell the wimmen folks to put on an extra plate, an' I'll put up the boss."

"I'm afraid I'm putting your family to some inconveniences," responded Albert, "and as it is not dark yet I will wait till after the meal."

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ly and gray haired woman. "I found him up the road a spell an' wantin' to know whar he was."

Albert bowed.

"I am sorry to intrude," he said, "but I had lost my boat and all points of the compass when your husband kindly took me in charge."

Being offered a chair, Albert sat down and was left alone. He surveyed the plainly furnished sitting room, with open fireplace, a many colored rag carpet on the floor, old fashioned chairs and dozens of pictures on the walls. They caught his eye at once, mainly because of the oddity of the frames, which were evidently homemade, and then a door was opened, and Uncle Terry invited him into a lighted room where a table was set. The elderly lady was standing at one end of it and beside her a younger one, and as Albert entered he heard Uncle Terry say, "This is our gal Tolly, Mr. Page," and as he bowed he saw, garbed in spotless white, the girl he had seen leaning against the rock and watching the sunset.

CHAPTER XX.

THE appealing yet wondering glance that Albert Page met as he bowed to the girl standing beside the table that evening was one he never afterward forgot. It was only one, for after that and during the entire meal her blue eyes were kept veiled by their long lashes or modestly directed elsewhere.

"It's a charming spot down here," he remarked soon after the meal began, "and so hidden that it is a surprise. I noticed the light as we came in, but did not see the village."

"Waal, ye didn't miss anything," responded his host. "None o' the houses are much for style, an' mebbe it's lucky they're hid behind the rocks."

"I thought they quaint and comfortable," observed Albert, "but what an odd name you have for the place! Why do you call it Saint's Rest?"

"Chiefly 'cause none o' the people have any chance to become sinners, I reckon," was the answer. "It's a trifle lonesome in the winter, though."

"I suppose being is your principal occupation here," continued Albert, seeing that sentiment was not considered by Uncle Terry. "Your land does not seem adapted for cultivation."

"There ain't much chance for tillin'," he replied. "The land's wuss'n whar I was bring up, down in Connecticut, an' that we had ter round up the sheep once a week an' sharpen their noses on the grist-stun! We manage ter raise 'nough ter eat, though."

When the meal was over Uncle Terry said: "It's nice an' cool out on the rocks, an' that's some seats out thar. If ye enjoy smokin' we best go out while the wimmen are doin' the dishes."

The moon that Frank had planned to use was uparing its full and high overhead, and as the two men sought congeniality in tobacco out on that lonesome point, Albert couldn't curb his admiration for the scene. His offer of a cigar to his host had been accepted, and as that quiet man sat quietly enjoying an odor and flavor he was unaccustomed to Albert said:

"This experience has been a surprise to me from the moment I met you. I had an ugly hour's scramble over the

rocks and through a tangle of scrub spruce and briars until I was utterly lost and believed this island an impassable wilderness. Then you came along and brought me to one of the most beautiful spots I ever saw. I should like to stay here all summer and do nothing but look at this magnificent ocean view and sketch these bold shores."

"Do you paint pictures too?" queried Uncle Terry, suddenly interested. "Tolly's daft on doin' that, an' is at it all the time she can git." Then he added with a slight reflection of pride, "Mebbe ye noticed some o' her pictures in the sittin' room?"

"I saw a lot of pictures there," answered Albert, "but it was too dark to see them well. I should like to look at them in the morning."

"Ye'll hev plenty o' time," was the reply. "I must pull my lobster traps fast, an' after that I'll take ye in my dory an' we'll go an' find yer boat. I guess she must be lyin' in Seal cove, the only openin' 'twixt here an' the head shod'd be likely ter run into."

"And so your daughter is an artist, is she?" asked Albert, indifferent now as to where the Gypsy was or when he was likely to return to her. "Has she ever taken lessons?"

"No, it comes nat'ral to her," replied Uncle Terry. "She showed the bent o' her mind 'fore she was ten year old, an' she's fostered me ever since ter git her canvases an' paints an' s'ch. But then, I'm willin' ter," he added in a tender tone. "Tolly's a good girl, an' Lissy an' me set great store by her. She's all we've got in the world. Then pointin' to a small white stone just to the right of where they were, he added, "That's whar the other one's been layin' fer morn' twenty year."

"This one has grown to be a very beautiful girl," said Albert quietly, "and you have reason to be proud of her."

Uncle Terry made no reply, but seemed lost in a reverie, and Albert slowly puffing his cigar and looked out on the ocean and along the ever widening path of moonlight. He wished that this fair girl, so quaintly spoken of, were there beside him, that he might talk to her about her art. How it could be managed and what excuse to give for remaining longer than the morrow he could not see. He looked toward the house, white in the moonlight, with the tall lighthouse and its beacon flash just beyond, and wondered if he should see the girl again that night. He was on the point of suggesting they go in and visit a little with the ladies when Uncle Terry said:

"I believe ye called yerself a lawyer, Mr. Page, an' from Boston. Do ye happen to know a lawyer that has got eyes like a cat an' rubs his hands as if he was washin' 'em while he's talkin'?"

Albert gave a start. "I do, Mr. Terry," he answered. "I know him well. His name is Frye, Nicholas Frye."

"An' as ye're a lawyer, an' one that looks to me as honest," continued Uncle Terry, "what is yer honest opinion of this Mr. Frye?"

"That is a question I would rather not answer," replied Albert, "until I know why you ask it and what your opinion of Mr. Frye is. Mine might not flatter him, and I do not believe in

speaking ill of anybody unless forced to."

Uncle Terry was silent, evidently revolving a serious problem in his mind. "I am goin' to beg yer pardon, Mr. Page," he said at last, "fer speakin' the way I did regardin' lawyers in general. My 'perience with 'em has been bad, an' naturally I don't trust 'em much. I've had some dealin's with this 'ere Frye 'bout a matter I don't want to tell 'bout, an' the way things is workin' 'out as they should be. I b'lieve I'm robbed right along, an' if ye're willin' to help me I shall be most fanally grateful an' will give ye my word I'll never let on to anybody what ye say—an' Silas Terry never yit broke his promise."

Albert silently offered his hand to Uncle Terry, who grasped it cordially. "I will tell you, Mr. Terry," he said after the handshake, "all I know about Mr. Frye and what my opinion is of him. What your business with him is, matters not. I am certain you will keep your word. I recently worked for Mr. Frye six months and left him to open an office for yerself. In that six months I became satisfied Nicholas Frye was the most unprincipled villain ever masked under the name of lawyer. If all those you have had business with were like him, I don't wonder at your remark today."

Uncle Terry leaned forward, with elbows on his knees, resting his face in the palms of his hands, and ejaculated: "I knew it! I knew it! I'm a blamed old fool an' ought to hev a keeper put over me!" Then turning to Albert he added, "I've paid that thief over \$400 this year an' hain't got a scrap of paper to show fer 't, an' nothin's been done so far as I kin see 'bout the business." He meditated a few moments and then turning around suddenly added: "My wife an' Tolly don't know nothin' 'bout this, an' I don't want they should. That's a sucker born every mornin' an' two to ketch him, an' I b'lieve it! I've been ketchin' an' skinned fer dead sure. I want to sleep out, an' mebbe in the mornin' I'll tell 'em the hull story an' how I've been made a fool of. I'm beggin' to think I kin trust ye."

"I thank you for your good opinion," answered Albert, "and if I can help you in any way I will."

When the two returned to the house, Albert was shown to a room that reminded him of his boyhood home, the old fashioned bed, spotless counterpane and muslin curtains all seemed so sweet and wholesome. A faint odor of lavender carried him back to the time when his mother's bed linen exhaled the same sweet fragrance. He lighted a cigar and sat down by a window where the crisp salt sea air came in, and tried to fathom what manner of business Uncle Terry could have with Frye. And into this meditation also crept the face and form of the girl he had first seen watching the sunset.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHEN Albert arose the next morning the sun was just appearing round and red out of the ocean and a crisp breeze blowing into the open windows. He heard the str of some one below and, dressing quickly, descended to the sitting room. No one was there, and he stood for a moment looking at the curiously framed paintings that almost covered the wall.

One in particular caught his eye. It was a ship careened on the ocean with waves breaking upon her. She was resting on rocks that barely showed beneath, and in her rigging, heavily covered with ice, were five men. All around was the sea, tossed into giant waves, curling and breaking about the stranded vessel. He noted the like-like shading of the green and white billows, the ice that covered every shroud and rope and spar, and peering out of a cabin door was a woman holding a babe in her arms. In a way it was a ghastly picture and one that held his attention from all the rest.

It was framed in a broad, flat molding covered with shells. He was still gazing at it when he heard Uncle Terry's voice bidding him good morning. "Ain't ye up a little arly?" said that worthy. "I hope ye sleep well. I generally rouse out by daylight an' put out the light an' then start a fire, but there was no need of you gettin' out so soon."

"I think the waves woke me," replied Albert, "and the morning is so beautiful I couldn't waste it in bed."

"I'm goin' over to the cove to mend a trap," continued Uncle Terry, "an' if ye're willin' I'd like to hev ye go along too. The wimmen 'll hev breakfast ready by that time, an' then I'll take ye up to Seal cove an' see if yer boat's thar."

He seemed depressed and not inclined to talk, and Albert sat on an overturned dory and watched him putting away over a lobster trap. His hat had fallen off, and the sea winds blew his scant fringe of gray hair over his bald head. His brown shirt was open at the throat, disclosing a bony neck, and his well worn garments showed the outlines of a somewhat wasted form. What impressed Albert more than all this was the dejected manner of Uncle Terry. When he finished fixing the trap he pulled a dory in that was moored out in the cove and carefully bailed and wiped it clean. When this was done he said almost wistfully: "I've worried a good deal 'bout what ye told me last night, an' I'd like to have a good talk with ye. I s'pose ye're anxious to see yer friends an' I'll take ye up the island the fast thing an' then go an' pull my traps, an' then if ye're willin' we'll set down, if it ain't askin' too much of ye to wait," he added almost pathetically. "I'll get Tolly to show yer pictures, an' mebbe ye can give her some p'int's as I'll help her."

"I shall be more than glad to do so," replied Albert, "but if that shipwreck scene is hers, she needs no advice from me."

Uncle Terry looked pleased, but made no answer. On the way back to the house he said, "I'd rather ye'd make no mention to the wimmen of our bevin' in any talk."

At the breakfast table he seemed in better spirits and more like himself. "I think ye told me last night," he remarked, addressing Albert, "that ye painted pictures yerself some." And then, turning to Tolly, he added, "Mr. Page is comin' back here bimely jest to look round, an' mebbe he'd like to look at some of yourn."

Tolly's face flushed slightly. "I shall be delighted," added Albert, "if Miss Terry will favor me. Will you?" he added in a persuasive tone.

"I do not feel that my pictures are good enough to show to strangers," she answered in a low voice. "I have never had any lessons or any one to show me."

"From what I've noticed in your sitting room," responded Albert quickly, "you need not be ashamed to show them to an artist. I am not one. I only sketch a little, just as a remembrance o' places I visit, but I love pictures even better than music."

"I will gladly show you what I have done," replied Tolly simply, and there the conversation ended. When the meal was over Albert observed, "With your permission, Mrs. Terry, I would like to make a sketch of your home and the lighthouse, and after Mr. Terry has helped me to find my friends I am coming back." Then, turning to Tolly, he added, "I can then feel easy in my mind and shall enjoy looking over your paintings."

"Won't ye stop to dinner with us?" asked Aunt Lissy as Albert thanked her for her hospitality. "We'll be glad to have ye."

"I will, thank you," replied Albert. "This point, and in fact this village, was such a surprise to me and is so charming I am going to devote all my day to it." Then, bidding the ladies good morning, he followed Uncle Terry over to the cove, where they boarded his dory and started out to find the Gypsy.

"And she has the soul of an artist in her," Albert said to himself, as Uncle Terry pulled the dory out of the harbor and up the coast toward where he had been left stranded. "And what eyes, and what a perfect form!"

As good luck would have it, when they rounded a point, there was the Gypsy following the island shore down to meet them. Albert stood up and waved his cap. He was answered by the whistle and in an instant every one on board of her, even the crew, were out on her bows and waving caps lustily. The skipper kept the whistle blowing, and as the yacht slowed down and Uncle Terry pulled alongside, Albert was seized and almost dragged on board. Frank was so overjoyed he hugged him and then gave vent to a war whoop that might have been heard the entire length of Southport Island.

"We guessed what had happened to you," he said, "when we picked up your boat. It was almost dark when one of the crew saw an empty boat floating up the bay. We were all down in the cabin at that time and had not noticed how late it was, when he called us. Two of the crew lowered the other boat and when they got back with yours we nearly had a fit. The missing cushions and loop on the painter gave us a clue and we half expected you would find your way back to the Gypsy by land."

"I guess you're not much acquainted with the interior of Southport Island," put in Albert, and then going forward he brought back Uncle Terry and introduced him to the crew. By this time the Gypsy was almost down to the Cape and, under one bell and the direction of Uncle Terry, she slowly stemmed in. That worthy man had been looking over her and his admiration was evident.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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