

Uncle Terry

By CHARLES CLARK MUNN

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CHAPTER XXV.

How did ye like the prayer meetin'?" asked Uncle Terry the next morning as Albert stood watching him getting ready to start on his daily rounds. "Did the Wilder Leach make ye feel ye was a hopeless sinner?"

"It was an interesting experience," replied Albert, "and one I shall not soon forget."

"Oh, it don't do 'em no harm to git together an' pray an' sing, an' most likely it diverts their minds from their troubles; but, in my way of thinkin', prayin' is a good deal like a feller tryin' to lift himself by his boot straps. It encourages him some, but he don't git much further." Then he added, "You haven't thought of no way to git me out of my scrape, ho ye?"

"I have thought a good deal about it," replied Albert, "and the best way, it seems to me, is for you to go to Frye and tell him you can't afford to carry the case any further and offer to pay whatever fee he sees fit to ask. You can tell him you will give up the case entirely, and ask him to return the proofs you want. I may decide to have a detective within hearing, so that if he refuses you these things we can use the detective as a witness in a replevin suit. Most likely he will demand quite a sum, but it is best to pay it if we can get the proofs. I will advance money enough to cover what he is likely to ask. What I want you to do is to wait until he sends for more money; then come to me at once."

Uncle Terry looked at Albert a moment and suddenly, grasping his hand, exclaimed, "I can't thank ye 'nough for yer offer to help me, but I kin say how sorry I am I distrusted ye at first, an' as long as I've a roof to cover my head ye're sure to find a welcome under it an' the latest lather allus out."

"I thank you for your kindly words, Mr. Terry," responded Albert, "and I am likely to avail myself of your invitation again before the summer is over. I expect my friends back today and must join them, but I assure you I would much prefer to stay here for the two weeks I have planned for my outing."

"Ye won't go till I see ye again, will ye?" asked Uncle Terry anxiously.

"No," if the Gypsy shows up today we will stay in the harbor tonight, and I should like to have you and Miss Terry visit her." Then as the old man pushed off and pulled out of the cove with long, slow strokes, Albert watched him with a new interest. "Poor old fellow!" he thought. "He is honest as the day is long and has a heart of gold beneath his blunt speech. How hard he has to work for what he gets, and what a vile thing in Frye to rob him so!"

When the old man was out of sight Albert stroled over to the village. On the outer side of the harbor and opposite where the houses were came some long rows of slat benches, and busy at work spreading split fish upon them was the old lady who had thanked the Lord so fervently at the prayer meeting.

For an hour he strolled around the harbor watching the men at work on boats or fishing gear and sniffing the salt sea odor of the ocean breeze, and then returned to the point and began sketching the lighthouse. He was absorbed in that when he heard a sharp whistle, and looking up there was the Gypsy boat entering the harbor. He ran to the cove where he had left his boat, and by the time the yacht was anchored had pulled alongside. To his surprise no one was aboard but Frank. "Where are the rest of the boys?" he asked, as that young man grasped his boat. Frank laughed. "Well, just about now they are playing tennis and calling 'fifteen love' and 'thirty love' and a lot of girls is down at Bar Harbor. The fact is, Bert," he continued as Albert stepped aboard, "our gander cruise has come to an end. They ran into some girls they knew, and after that all the Gypsy was good for was a place to eat and sleep in. I've run her up here and shall let you keep her with you until you get ready to go home. An' going to cut sticks for the mountains, and if I can get one of the girls to go with me I may visit Sandgate."

Albert laughed heartily. "Want to hear some one sing 'Ten Bolt' again?" he queried.

"Well, maybe," replied Frank. "The fact of the matter is, the whole trip has gone wrong from the start. You know what I wanted, but as it couldn't be, I did the next best thing and made up this party, and now the cruise has ended in a fizzle. By the way, where is the girl with the wonderful eyes you met here?"

"Just now I imagine she's helping her mother in the house," answered Albert quietly; and then he added, "Well, what is the programme, and where are you going with the Gypsy?"

"I want to be landed at the nearest port where I can reach a railroad, and then you can do as you please with her. My skipper will do your bidding."

"What about the rest of the boys?"

"Well, you can run to Bar Harbor and dance with the girls, and the rest want to come back, or you can do as you please. The Gypsy is yours as long as you want her after I'm ashore. I think I'll run to Bath and take the night train for the mountains if there is one. If not, we will lie at Bath overnight."

"I must go ashore and leave word I am coming back," said Albert. "The fact is I've found a client in this Mr. Terry, and it's an important matter."

"So is the blue eyed girl, I imagine," observed Frank, with a droil smile. When the irrepressible owner of the Gypsy had deserted her Albert returned to the Cape and remained there for a week. How many little trips he made he only knows, and how many friends he met during that time, how much gossip it created in the village and how many happy hours he and Tolly passed together! The last day of one of his trips he invited everybody at the Cape, old or young, to go out on a short cruise, and nearly all accepted.

When the morning of his departure came, Uncle Terry said, "I hope you will see ye soon, Mr. Page, and ye're sure of a welcome here, so don't forget us," and then he pulled away on his daily round to his traps.

Tolly accompanied Albert to the cove where his boat was and bade him goodbye. When the yacht rounded the point she was there waving an adieu and remained there until lost from sight.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The one point of pride in Nicholas Frye's nature was his absolute belief in his own shrewdness. "They can't get the best of me," he would say to him-

self when he had won an unusually knotty case. He knew he was both hated and feared by his fellow members of the bar. Being hated he didn't mind, and being feared flattered his vanity to an intense degree. When Uncle Terry put himself in his power and, like a good natured old sheep, stood to be sheared, Frye only laughed at his client's stupidity and set out to continue the robbery as long as possible. Messrs. Thygeson & Co. of Stockholm, who had first employed him to hunt up an heir to the estate of old Eric Peterson, whose son Nettles and his young wife had been lost on the coast of Maine, fared no better. To them he only stated that he had found several promising clues and was following them as rapidly as possible, but it all cost money, and would they kindly send a draft on account for necessary expenses, etc. When Albert had taken away his best client the old scoundrel suffered the worst blow to his vanity he ever received. "Curse the fellow!" he would say to himself. "I'll pay him and have revenge if I live long enough. No man ever got the best of me, and in the long run no man ever shall!"

But there is a Nemesis that follows evil deeds in this world, ready to strike with an invisible hand all who are lost to the sense of right and justice. In Frye's case the avenging goddess lurked in his inordinate belief in his own shrewdness, coupled with a fatuous love of speculation. A few lucky ventures at first in the stock market had fanned the flame.

Then along came a war cloud in Europe. Stocks began to drop and provisions to advance. September wheat was then selling in Chicago at 90 cents. Frye bought 50,000 bushels on a margin.

France and Germany growled, and wheat rose to \$1. Frye sold, clearing \$2,000. Then it dropped a cent, and Frye bought a hundred thousand bushels more. Once again the war cloud grew black, and wheat rose to 98. The papers were full of wild rumors, and the Wall Street Bugle said wheat would leap at a dollar and a half inside of a month. Then it advanced to \$1, and Frye lost his head. His holdings showed a profit of \$7,000, and sudden riches stared him in the face. Once more the two bellicose foreign powers growled and showed their teeth. Wheat rose another cent, and Frye doubled his holdings. Then the powers that had growled snuffed faintly, and in one day wheat fell to 93 and was still falling. At every drop of a cent he was called upon for \$2,000. Day by day it vibrated, now going up a cent and then dropping two, and when Uncle Terry and Albert were discussing how to checkmate his further robbing of the lighthouse keeper he was, with much regret, watching his ill-gotten gains vanish to the tune of one thousand dollars per diem. He neglected his business, went without his meals and forgot to shave. He had mortgaged his real estate for \$20,000, and that was nearly gone. Wheat was now down to 80, and France and Germany were shaking hands.

Frye could not sleep nights. His margins were almost exhausted and his resources as well. He had put up \$40,000, and if wheat fell 3 cents more it would be all swept away. Then he executed a second mortgage at high interest and waited. It was the last shot in his locker, and all that stood between him and ruin, but when advanced 2 cents, and he began to hope. He had absolutely ignored business for two weeks, and now he went to work again. To collect the little due him and raise all the money he could was his sole thought. He wrote to Thygeson & Co. that he had at last found the heir they were in search of and described what proofs he held, at the same time stating that on receipt of his fee of a thousand dollars all and sufficient proofs of identity of the claimant would be forwarded. Then he wrote to Uncle Terry and demanded \$300 more. September wheat had now fallen to 78.

CHAPTER XXVII.

BLANCH NASON, Frank's younger sister, was his good friend and sympathizer and in all the family discussions had usually taken his part. His elder sister, Edie, was like her mother, rather arrogant and supercilious, and considered her brother as lacking in family pride and liable to disgrace them by some unfortunate alliance. It was to Blanch he always turned when he needed sympathy and help, and to her he appeared the day after he had left the Gypsy. His coming to the mountains surprised her not a little.

"Why, what has brought you here, Frank?" she asked. "I thought you were having high jinks down in Maine on the yacht with your cronies."

"Oh, that is played out," he answered. "The boys are at Bar Harbor, having a good time. Bert is at a little un- heard of place saying sweet things to a pretty girl he found there, and I got lonesome, so I came up here to see you and get you to help me."

"I thought so," answered Blanch, laughing. "You never did come to me unless you wanted help. Well, who is the girl now, and what do you want?"

Frank looked surprised. "How do you know it is a girl?" he asked.

"I usually is with you," she answered, eying him curiously. "So out with it. What's her name?"

"Alice Page," he replied.

"What, the girl you wanted us to invite to go on the yacht?" asked Blanch.

"That's the one, and, as you know, she wouldn't come."

"Which shows her good sense," interrupted Blanch. "Well, what can I do in the matter?"

"Much if you want to, and nothing if you don't," he answered. "The fact is, sis, I want you to pack a trunk and go with me to call on her. She is mighty proud, and I imagine that is why she turned the cold shoulder on my efforts to get her to come to Boston to meet you all. Now, if you go by her only, for one night, the ice will be broken, and of course you will invite her to visit you and all will go well."

"A nice little scheme," responded Blanch, "but what will mamma and Edie say?"

"Oh, never mind them," answered the plotters. "They need never know. Just tell them you are going to Saratoga with me for a few days. We will go there if you like, only we will stop off at Sandgate on the way. Now, do this for me, sis, and I'll buy you the earth when Christmas comes!"

"Well, you will have to stay here until Monday," said Blanch, "and be real nice to mamma and Edie all the time, or I can't fix it. Lucky for you, Master Frank, that they are out driving now."

"But why must we wait four days?" asked Frank petulantly.

"Because, my love torn brother, in the first place I don't want to miss the Saturday night hop, and then we are booked for a buckboard ride tomorrow. Another reason is I mean to pay you

for turning your back on us and going off on the Gypsy."

That afternoon Frank wrote Alice the longest letter she had ever received, nine full pages. It was received with some pleasure and a little vexation by Alice.

"Mr. Nason and his sister are coming here Monday," said she to Aunt Susan, "and we must put on our best bit and tucker, I suppose. But how can we contrive to entertain his sister is beyond me." Nevertheless, she was rather pleased at the prospective visitation. Her school had been closed for over a month and her daily life was becoming decidedly monotonous. When Albert had written regarding the invitation the Nasons had extended, she believed it was due solely to Frank's influence, and when that young man tried to obtain her consent to join a yachting party, providing his mother and sister decided to go, she was morally sure of it. But it made no difference, for if the supposedly aristocratic Mrs. Nason had sent her a written invitation she was the last person in the world to accept it. To go out of her way for the possible opportunity of obtaining the only son of a rich family to pay court to her was not characteristic of Alice Page. Rather a thousand times would she teach school in single blessedness all her life than be considered as putting herself in the way of a probable suitor. Of her own feelings toward Frank she was not at all sure. He was a good looking young fellow and no doubt stood well socially. At first she had felt a little contempt for him, due to his complaints that he had had hard work to kill time. When she received the letter announcing his determination to study law and become a useful man in the world she thought better of him. When he came up in June it became clear that he was in love with her. So self evident were his feelings that she at that time felt compelled to avoid giving him a chance to express them. Her heart was and always had been entirely free from the shadow of love, and while his devotion was in a way quite flattering, the one insurmountable barrier was his family. Had he been more diplomatic he would never have told her his mother frowned at him when he danced twice with a poor girl.

"I am a poor girl," Alice thought, when he made the admission, "but I'll never forget all my life before his naughty mother shall read him a lecture for dancing twice with me."

Ever since the day Mrs. Mears had related the village gossip to her she had thought a good many times about the cause of it, but to no one had she mentioned the matter. Her only associate, good natured Abby Miles, had never dared to speak of it, and Aunt Susan was wise enough not to.

Now that Frank and his fashionable sister were coming to Sandgate, Alice felt a good deal worried. Firstly, she knew her own stock of gowns was inadequate. While not vain of her looks, she yet felt his sister would consider her unbecomingly dressed or else realize the truth that she was painfully poor. She had made the money her brother gave her go as far as possible. Her own small salary was not more than enough to pay current expenses. When the day and train arrived, and she had ushered her two guests to their rooms, her worry began.

Frank had come, and as she basely herself to help Aunt Susan get supper under way before she changed her dress she was morally sure Miss Nason would appear in a gown fit for a state dinner. But when she was dressed and went out on the porch, where her guests were, she found Miss Blanch at her heels, and she was surprised to find her so simple. It was a pleasant surprise, and at no time during their stay did Alice consider herself poorly clad. During the conversation that evening Blanch gave an interesting description of her life in the mountains, who were there, what gowns the ladies wore, the hops, drives, tennis, croquet and what games, and when the topic was exhausted Alice turned to Frank and said, "Now, tell us about your trip."

"There is not much to tell," he answered in a disappointed tone. "The fact is, my yachting trip was a failure. I had a two weeks' trip all mapped out, and all the stores on board, and anticipated lots of fun, but it didn't materialize. The second day Bert got lost on the island, and we didn't find him until the next day. In the meantime he had found a pretty girl and acted as if he had become smitten with her. Then we ran to Bar Harbor, and the rest of the boys found some girls they knew and decided that a gander cruise had lost its charms. So I threw up my hands and turned the Gypsy over to Bert, and for all I know or care he is using her to entertain his island fairy."

Alice joined with Blanch in a good laugh at Frank's description of his trip. When the chitchat slowed down Alice said: "I don't know how to entertain you two good people in this dull place. There are mountains and woods galore and lots of pretty drives. And," looking at Frank, "I know where there is a nice mill pond full of lilies and an old moss covered mill and a miller that looks like a picture in story books. There is also a drive to the top of the mountain, where the view is simply grand. I have a steady going and faithful old horse, and we will go whenever you like."

"Do not worry about me, Miss Page," replied Blanch. "If I can see mountain and woods I am perfectly happy."

"When the evening was nearing its close Frank begged Alice to sing, but she declined.

"Do you play or sing, Miss Nason?" she asked cautiously.

"Oh, please don't be afraid of me," was the answer. "I never touched a piano in my life. Once in a while I join in the chorus, as they say, for my own amusement and the amusement of others, but that is all."

It wasn't all, for she played the guitar and sang sweetly. Finally Alice was persuaded to open the piano, and then out upon the still night air there flowed many an old time melody. Alice that she played selections from a few of the latest light operas that Frank had sent her and then turned away. "Oh, don't stop now," exclaimed both her guests at once. "Sing a few more songs." Then, with almost an air of proprietorship, Frank arose and, going to the piano, searched for and found a well known song. Without a word he opened it and placed it on the music rack. It was "Ten Bolt." A faint color rose in Alice's face, but she trusted and played the prelude without a word. When she had sung the first verse, to her surprise Blanch was standing beside her and joined her voice in the next one. When it was finished Frank insisted on a repetition, and after that all three sang a dozen more of the sweet old time songs so familiar to all. Then Alice left the room to bring in a light lunch, and Frank seized the opportunity to say, "Well, sis, what do you think?"

"I think," she replied, "that you were foolish to go yachting at all. If I had been you, I should have come up here in the first place, stayed in the

hotel and courted her every chance I could. I am in love with her myself, and we haven't been here six hours."

Frank stepped up to her quickly and, taking her face in his hands, kissed her.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

TWO days of Alice's visitation passed like a summer breeze. The first day they drove to the old mill and spent the entire forenoon gathering lilies and watching the great wheel that dripped and clattered between its moss grown walls. It was a curiosity to Blanch, for never in her life had she seen one of those old time landmarks, now so rare. That afternoon they drove to the mountain's top and saw the sunset, only to be late home to Aunt Susan's ten biscuit and cold chicken, and having a surprising appetite. The next day they made a picnic trip to another mountain, leaving the horse and wagon for never in her life had she seen one of those old time landmarks, now so rare. That afternoon they drove to the mountain's top and saw the sunset, only to be late home to Aunt Susan's ten biscuit and cold chicken, and having a surprising appetite. 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