

## THE WORST OF ENEMIES.

I do not fear an enemy  
Who all his days hath hated me.  
I do not bother o'er a few  
Whose name and face I do not know.  
I mind me not the small attack  
Of him who bites behind my back:  
But Heaven help me to the end  
'Gainst that one who was once my friend.  
—John K. Bangs in Harper's Weekly.

## A FEEBLE ATONEMENT.

"E's tipsey!" "E's 'aving a rest!" "What is it?" "Only a sandwich man!" One of the miserable gutter file had slipped and fallen on the Strand pavement. With the imperial air of the neophyte medicine man, Talbot Villiers parted the crowd. A Samaritan stood by with a little brandy in a glass. Talbot put it to the human advertisement's lips. The man opened his eyes with a look of gratitude. The look touched the young medical student. He held up his finger for a cab, then he assisted the fallen man into it and took a seat opposite.

"Where to?" asked Talbot. "Where do you live? I am going home with you."

"Talbot street, Westminster, No. 5," murmured the other feebly. "My name is Stern, John Stern."

Talbot gave the direction to the cabman; then he examined his companion more closely. He was an elderly man of refined features. His clothes, though shabby, were remarkably clean, his linen was clean, and he was clean shaven, in fact, such a surplus of cleanliness in one of his late occupation was rather suspicious.

Stern bore the young man's scrutiny with visible uneasiness. He leaned suddenly over to Villiers.

"Sir," he said, "if you are going home with me, will you keep my carrying of the boards a secret? I don't want it to come to the ears of my daughter. I am pretty nearly useless for work, but I wish to help her all I can, and that is why I come into the city to carry these boards. She thinks I work in an office."

"I quite understand," said Talbot pityingly. "Your secret is safe with me." The words of the man had aroused every generous instinct of his nature. "What made you faint?"

"Hunger," replied Stern laconically.

Talbot made a hurried motion to stop the cab. Stern laid his hand on his arm and restrained him. "No, sir," he said. "I am indebted to you already. You cannot help me further; I cannot take anything from you, even food. But I thank you, all the same."

Stern's tone was decisive, and Talbot regarded him in amazement. The first answer showed him what little way he had made in medical diagnosis; the second, how little he knew of human nature. The pride that prevented a hungry man accepting food was to Talbot preposterous. This feeling gave way, however, to one of involuntary respect. At last the cab stopped. Cabs seemed a novelty in Talbot street, for a face appeared at nearly every window. A girl of about twenty was looking from No. 5. As the cab drew up she turned very pale and rushed to the door.

"My daughter, Kate," said Stern. "Remember your promise, sir."

"All right," replied Talbot; then as the girl came to the cab door, he raised his hat. "Don't be alarmed; your father has happened with a slight accident. He slipped on the curb. He's all right; but I thought I had better drive home with him from the office."

At the sight of her father walking from the cab, the color rushed back to her cheeks in such vivid and delicate tints, and showed so clearly the beauty of her complexion, that Talbot stood gazing at her in silent admiration. His eyes lingered on her in a most embarrassing silence. They took in the lines of the slight graceful figure, the nut-brown hair and the honest steadfast eyes.

"I'll call to-morrow," he said, with a start, "and hear how he is—that is, if you don't mind."

It was evident that Kate regarded him as a junior member of some unknown and eminently Christian firm. "You are very kind," she said—very kind indeed."

"Don't mention it," stammered Talbot. "Good morning—I mean good afternoon—Miss Stern."

He re-entered the cab, and telling the cabman to drive anywhere, escaped from Talbot street in some confusion. But he was true to his promise. He called the next day and the day after, and many more times. The state of Stern's health seemed to become a very serious matter. At last this pleasant fiction exploded. He came one afternoon when hereyes were weary with typewriting, and the sight maddened him. He clasped her in his arms. "Kate, my own dear Kate," he cried. "I love you and I want you to be my wife. Will you, Kate?"

Kate looked into his eyes. He needed no other answer; and they passed the afternoon building up a quiet little Bloomsbury practice. Stern was to be made a dispenser. Over the teacups Kate told her father of Talbot's proposals. He kissed her and sighed. It was not in him to spoil a love-dream; but he scented danger. Talbot Villiers was a gentleman in every sense of the word; but Talbot Villiers had undoubtedly a father. Who was he? Villiers, senior, would without doubt have his say, unless he was a very mild father indeed.

Early the next day when Stern had "copying" to do in the city, a letter arrived from Talbot enclosing two tickets for the theatre. The letter ran: "I want you and your father both to see this piece. It was produced last night with the greatest success. After you have both seen it I'll tell you why I am so anxious you should go. I have enclosed some press cuttings which will give you an idea of the plot and the way it is staged. I'm sorry I can't come; but I have a little business to transact with dad."

It was the first time he had mentioned that ominous person. Dad suddenly loomed up very large in Kate's thoughts. Villiers, senior, unac-

countably depressed her. She tried to throw this depression off by telling her father about the theatre. The play was called "A Woman's Love." Stern had carried the boards that advertised its "first night." To Kate's great astonishment, her father refused to go. She pressed him why.

"I can't go," said Stern, gravely. "Don't look so grieved, Kate. Let me tell you why; then perhaps you will understand me. A long time ago I wrote a play."

"You wrote a play?" interrupted Kate, breathlessly. "I knew, you dear, old father, you were clever. Talbot said you were clever. He said you had a clever face."

Stern smiled sadly at this innocent tribute. "Writing a play, Kate, and getting it acted are two very different things. I wrote this play in want, in misery, and with an ailing wife by my side. I wrote it in the odd moments snatched from my work. I built high hopes upon it, my dear; I put my whole heart into it, and I fondly dreamt it would lift me from a burden of debt and give me a home. I signed it with a nom de plume, and sent it to a dramatist called Fielding Clark. I called upon him afterward and asked his opinion of the play. He told me he had lost it. Then, Kate, I lost heart. Poverty drove me from pillar to post, and of the many things I grew to hate, the theatre was one."

Kate threw her arms round him and kissed him. "And to think but for that accident," she cried, "you might have been a great man! Never mind!"

"No," said Stern, wearily passing his hand over his forehead, "never mind. But what have you got in your hand?"

"They are the press notices of the new play. They came with the tickets."

"Well, my dear, I'm just going to have a pipe at the back of the house; I'll look over them. Perhaps I'll go, after all. You are entering soon on a new life, and it's about time I should throw aside such prejudices."

"Nodoubt," pursued Villiers, "you think the worst of me. It is not unnatural. But there are extenuating circumstances. I own the play was yours. I own I used it. But at the time you came to me it was really lost. I had mislaid it. I had no knowledge of your real name—I take it that the agreeable young lady who has just left us is your daughter—I had no means of reaching you. I sought for you; I advertised for you under the name of Sinclair; in the tide of London life you were swept away. Then, Sinclair—I mean Stern—I was tempted. There came to me the great temptation of my life. I was worked out; a manager stood at my elbow and took your play. It was culpable, very culpable; but the question is: 'What are you going to do?'" He paused and looked, not altogether without anxiety, at the man he had wronged.

"And if I judge aright," said the stranger still more blandly, "you are Miss Kate Stern. May I have the honor of a few minutes' conversation with you? My name is Barry Villiers."

"I fear," he began, "I have called on a rather unpleasant errand. To a third party he might easily have been mistaken for the one who was most to blame. What was he going to do? The hot fire of vengeance had died from him. He stood now with only the cold ashes of lost hopes."

"Of course," said Villiers, "you harm him, prosecute me; but it would be unchristian." Stern thought of the sandwich boards and glared at him. "Give me the opportunity," he went on, "of making atonement. We are both middle-aged men. Why live in the past? Why should we cloud the happiness of others?"

Villiers bowed. "A boy-and-girl attachment," he said, airily. "I heard of it from my son's lips today. Of course, it cannot proceed. It is folly; but then, when were lovers wise? I can assure you, Miss Stern, though fully appreciating your affection for my son, that you must give up all thoughts of this marriage." He smiled.

"The happiness of others? What do you mean?"

"I'll explain," said Villiers. "You know me as Clark. Villiers is my name, and Talbot Villiers is my son. You may not have noticed the likeness. He takes after his mother."

"Thank God!" cried Stern, fervently; but the relationship troubled him.

"He loves your daughter. The match seemed to me an undesirable son with you. You are a mere child; I am a man of the world. We look at different standpoints. But a marriage is impossible. Your position—"

"You mean," interrupted Kate, "that you are rich and I am poor."

"Exactly. In all other respects you are, no doubt, my son's equal; but this unfortunate circumstance is sufficient to restrain me from giving my consent. I cannot see my son's prospects blighted. I am willing to pay any price—"

Kate's eyes blazed. The suave, insinuating manner of Talbot's "dad" roused her. His way of putting a price on the affections brought back her color. "My price," she said scornfully, "for what? The love I bear him?"

Villiers coolly changed his tactics. "Pardon me; I was wrong. I ought not to have made such a suggestion. But you say you love my son. Well, his career is in your hands. Will you blight it? It rests with you."

"You are putting the whole responsibility of his future on my shoulders," she answered bittily. "Is that the act of a gentleman? Is it the act of a father who loves his son?"

Villiers regarded her more attentively. His suavity diminished. "You are more clever," he said, coldly. "I think I understand. I will say no more. If you take my friendly visit in this spirit, I can do nothing. But you may take it as my last word that if my son marries you he does so a beggar; I cast him off; I utterly disown him."

"And yet," cried Kate, "you say you love him!"

Villiers took up his hat; he fixed her with a keen, cold glance. "I do. And here is my check book to prove it. I will pay any sum to release him from a degrading marriage."

"Degrading!" The girl staggered. "I will prove to you," she said, in a quavering tone, "which love is the strongest. I will give him up; I will tell him so from my own lips. And if ever you tell your son of this interview, you may say that I refused to marry him because I loved him. That is my answer." She sank into the chair from which she had risen, and covered her face with her hands. Barry Villiers' face lengthened.

"My dear young lady, I have wronged you. Pray, make some allowance for a father's affection. Let me reward you for this act of self-sacrifice." He pulled out his check book and stood beside her, apparently considering the sum, when the door

that led to the back opened and Stern walked in. He looked first at his daughter, then at Villiers. As their eyes met, something like an electric shock seemed to pass from one to the other.

"Fielding Clark!" cried Stern.

Kate gave a start. Barry Villiers was Fielding Clark, the dramatist. Talbot's father was the author of the play for which they had received the tickets. She turned an amazed look upon her father. His face frightened her.

"It was exultant and denunciatory. For a moment Stern's face seemed to have the same effect upon Barry Villiers. He seemed disconcerted, ill at ease. In Stern's hands were the press notices crumpled into a ball. Villiers was the first to regain his composure.

"Sinclair!" he cried, "John Sinclair, this is a surprise."

Stern turned to his daughter. "Leave us for a moment, Kate," he said. "I have a few words to say to this—this gentleman."

Kate rose, and with a wondering look at her father quitted the room. When she was gone he fixed a searching look on Barry Villiers. That gentleman promptly held out his hand. Stern contemptuously disengaged it.

"I don't know why you are in my house," he said slowly. "But no doubt you can explain it. I should say you are a man who could explain anything. Perhaps you can explain this?" He held up the crumpled ball of paper.

"These are the press notices of the play produced last night. That play was mine. You stole it. You are a liar and a villain!"

Villiers put down his hat. "Sinclair," he said, and his tones were almost plaintive, "you will regret those words. Yet, they were spoken in the heat of the moment, and I forgive you."

His retort was so staggering that Stern gazed at him dazed. He nearly apologized.

"Nodoubt," pursued Villiers, "you think the worst of me. It is not unnatural. But there are extenuating circumstances. I own the play was yours. I own I used it. But at the time you came to me it was really lost. I had mislaid it. I had no knowledge of your real name—I take it that the agreeable young lady who has just left us is your daughter—I had no means of reaching you. I sought for you; I advertised for you under the name of Sinclair; in the tide of London life you were swept away. Then, Sinclair—I mean Stern—I was tempted. There came to me the great temptation of my life. I was worked out; a manager stood at my elbow and took your play. It was culpable, very culpable; but the question is: 'What are you going to do?'" He paused and looked, not altogether without anxiety, at the man he had wronged.

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## WRAPS FOR AUTUMN.

### TIME HAS COME FOR THEIR CONSIDERATION.

**Women Who Bought Small, Frock Coats Last Winter Are Not Going to Throw Them Away—Many Being Made Over—Box Pattern Popular.**

**Coats and Capes.**

New York correspondence:

THE time has come for the consideration of coats, capes, and wraps, for buying new ones, though it is most difficult to make over the old with a semblance of the new when that can be managed. There is a deal of the latter going on, though, as usual, the new styles are not well adapted to making over. Depend upon it, all the women who bought swell frock coats for outside wear last year are

going to throw them away. They are right, too, for the woman who is buying new this fall will get a coat of box pattern if she has one. If she will have just what she wants, she will have a golf cape.

This cape is as different from the golf cape as can be. It is made of the same material as the golf cape, but it is not so well made, nor is it so well adapted to making over.

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