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DAWN

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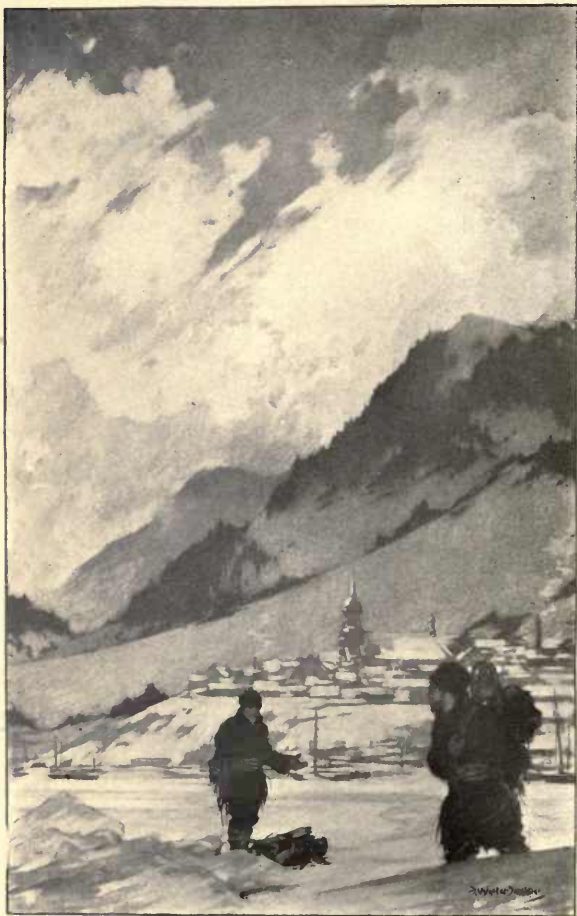
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Xmas 1913.

To Dear Mrs. Hervey  
From the  
S. A. Hervey's







“ Hoist that roll of blankets, Prosper ”



# DAWN

BY  
KATHARINE HOLLAND  
BROWN

ILLUSTRATED BY  
F. WALTER TAYLOR



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## DAWN

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“ IS it that you would make a jest of me, M’sieu ? ”

Prosper’s tone grew keenly plaintive. He swept the straits, ice-barred, flashing white in the blind November sunlight, with brown eloquent palms. “ That one should desire to camp in midwinter upon the Great Bear, that isle désolé, to live in that cabin of logs, with the chinks so gran’ that the snow shall sift in upon you like feathers, to feed upon these meats of tin, these horrors, to sit all day and behol’ only the sun, the storm ; to hear at night but the lament of these mis-érables, the pines — ”

“ I’ve told you my plans already. Come on.” Benedict swung the heavy bag over his shoulder and tried the ice with an unsteady foot. It rang beneath his shuffling stamp like a floor of polished steel.

“ But the air ! It is of a chill to wither, M’sieu. And there remains no game, nothing but a partridge, a starved hare, perhaps. And the ice is as the crust of the world. It will freeze again while that you may chop one hole for the fishing. Moreover, consider ! This solitude most horrible ! ”

“ Hoist that roll of blankets, Prosper.”

Prosper’s shrug ran the gamut of perplexities, rebukes, afflictions. “ And I am bind myself as guide to this maniac for the month ! ”



he muttered wrathfully. "Qu' c'est imbécile!"

Benedict, already staggering ahead beneath his pack, heard and laughed out. Two fools together they were, of a surety. Then, at the sound of his own voice, he stopped, panic-stricken; he blinked about him fearfully; his grip slackened on the heavy pack. Supposing They had heard him! Supposing They had seen!

He looked behind. His pinched gray face, his big wavering body, even, seemed to shrink, to concentrate to a focus of dread, all staring listening nerves. But there was nothing to fear; only a white harbor town, winter-sealed, its frosted roofs a-glitter, smoke rising in thin amethystine curls from the red chim-

neys. Beyond, the pines reared their solemn ramparts; before it, far as dazzled eye might follow, blazed the lake, ribbed in ice from rim to heart, a sea of glass and fire. A long cloud-rack drifted across the sun; dimmed like mist upon a shield, the lake fell violet, amber, rose, an answering heaven of radiances. Benedict shifted his pack; his dry lips relaxed. No wonder he was startled at his own laugh, he told himself apologetically, kicking back at the fears that hounded him. It was a good while since he had heard it. Up here he could laugh all he liked, thank the Lord. Up here he could breathe—he could let go!

He rubbed his hand against his head; it seemed as though the

strap that had tightened across his temples all these months loosened a little. However, it would never slacken completely, they had told him. He trotted on, stumbling over the rough ice; he spoke their verdict over to himself again and again, stolidly, patiently, as though he would fit his slipping wits to the meter of the truth. “— out-door life — freedom from responsibility — no more close application — ‘ Broken china, my dear Doctor ! Broken china ! ’ ”

No more close application ! Good God, what was life for ?

He ground his teeth at the mockery of it; his heart sickened within him. Was it for this that he had spent himself, body and soul, on the science that was as the breath

of his being? What if he had overworked? Men had overworked before, then doubled on their traces and dodged Retribution. But he had strung his powers to the breaking place for so long, so the physicians had explained, laboring to ease the blow. There were those five years in Leipsic, without a month of rest; there were the seven years in Bellevue, when he tramped the wards by day and slaved in his laboratory by night, and wrote at his book when he should have stopped for breath. Then came the ten years when he added a mounting snowball of private practice to his work as head surgeon of a great railway. That meant the strain of travel, of jarring light on eyes already taxed past endurance, respon-

sibilities that dragged and rasped and harried. He had kept up, though, cool, tautstrung, unfailing, until that day— Ah-h! He had better not remember.

Yet he did remember. He watched with gruesome amusement as the scroll of his shame unrolled before him. He had watched it so many times, in beating agony, in dull endurance! He could afford to be calm, now. It was all over and done with.

He saw the wide amphitheatre, the ranks of students leaning silent, watchful, their notebooks shut, unheeded. The internes stood at his elbow, fresh as young priests in their blanched linen; the nurses waited silent on his word. Beneath his hand, for life or for death, lay

the patient, a bearded Russian, gray-white under the ether ; he himself was working at the broad, hairy throat, his fingers sliding with wizard lightness, his low voice checking off orders, unhurried, swift. He was completing the operation ; he was tying the last tiny artery— Ugh ! Where could that blue fog come from ?

He brushed an impatient hand across his eyes. The room darkened slowly ; probably a thunderstorm was coming up. He stooped to the patient ; his fingers opened— shut— opened. What in the world possessed his hands that they would not grip ? The blue haze shut in thicker, thicker ; the patient's face was a wan blur.

He turned furiously to the near-

est interne. "Turn on the electrics!" he said harshly. The man gaped back at him, a sick face of bewilderment. He spoke again: then he knew that from his lips came only a senseless gurgle. They were pushing close around him now, internes, nurses, all staring, white-lipped. From the galleries there rang down to him a great cry: horror, pity unutterable. And as he would have thrust them back in a rage of explanation, with lips that could not move, with hands that fell open, lax as the hands of the dying, his Night had closed down upon him.

He would be well again, they had promised him, when, after long months he had learned to walk and to speak once more. Assuredly he

was well again, he reflected whimsically. His muscles were ungoverned, his sight was dimmed, his hands shook without ceasing; but he could eat and sleep, and carry a pack of half his own weight. What more could a man ask? He had laughed in their faces when they had told him gently that he could never practise again: the memory of their stare at the note of his laughter made him cringe now. At any rate, he was not mad—not yet. However, it might be hard to convince them of that. They had been disgustingly obstinate about other things. So he had stolen away up here, his place of sanctuary on his one other vacation, ten years ago. Up here he could breathe—he could let go!



“ Regard our palace ! ” sniffed Prosper, with a flourish. A log hut, banked to the sills in powdery snow, its tiny deep-set panes all gold-leaf in the westering light, stood close to the shore. Benedict answered faintly ; Prosper glanced round, then dropped his pack and dragged the exhausted man up the beach and into the low door. Benedict yielded to his deft care with the stupid docility so hardly learned through these slow months of torturing dependence. Perhaps this had been the bitterest cup ; he, always giver, to bow his head and receive !

Later, he lay in his bunk, lapped in the double luxury of warmth and silence, while Prosper flickered velvet-shod about the cabin. Within

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DAWN

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there shone no light save the deepening hearth-glow; through the port-hole window at his feet he looked out on the still winter world, hushed beneath the solemn magic of the frost. Away to the westward stretched the ice, a bleak gray sea, ridged in unmoving waves. Above, a few stars twinkled, high and clear. And the blue of the far night sky was the blue of an arch of steel.

“I wonder if there are any home stars on this forsaken coast,” muttered Benedict. This vast, impassive splendor chafed and daunted him. He stood an awed pygmy before this sovereignty of night and sea, unpitying, remote. “You, Prosper! Are there any other Arcadians loose on this isle désolé?”

Anybody that breathes, but the owls and the foxes ? ”

“ Neighbors ? Of a truth, yes, M’sieu. Regard to your left, on the shore of Sundered Island. Le voilà ! ”

The spark of light across the dip of the bay glimmered so faint, it might have been but another star. But its gleam was the golden shine of a hearth, not the cold, white glitter of far suns.

“ This is the cabin of the old McAlister, himself as is keeper of harbor lights for the Government. There lives he, even through the winter ; also his son Angus, and Twonnet, the wife of his son. And with her now is Nanna Saugier ; — half-breed, yes ; but woman of years and of wisdom. Twonnet is

possessed of neither, though she has of beauty enough and to spare. Ah, this is a fair blossom ! ”

“ Do you mean to tell me there are women living on this God-forsaken place ? ”

“ Assuredly, M’sieu. And the way of it is thus ; the old McAlister has remaining to him but this one son, the beloved of his heart. Always has he kept the boy with him, here upon this solitude ; always has he kept upon him the eye of a hawk, because of his great love, which fears ever that he may make some friend more dear to him than this father, who so adores him. Jealous ? Of a jealousy which would blight, M’sieu ; which would shrivel the new leaf upon the tree.

“ But the boy has never had



YOUNG ANGUS



thought for another till the year gone, when he has first seen Twonnet—Twonnet Beaupré, she was then. And it is like he has walked in his sleep, all his life ; with that first look he is wake' up. Of a truth, he is h'innocent ; he'll go to his father an' tell him all which he is come to feel.

“ ‘I must have her for wife,’ he'll say. ‘She shall be to you daughter and beloved ; and to both of us shall she take the place of the mother who is depart.’

“ Angry? Ah, but he has of wits, that old one, though he is of the Scotch blood, with the heart as hard as the fist. He has of wisdom to keep silence. The boy knows not the grief which he has given ; he goes on, blind in his new joy.

“ But his court prospers not. Twonnet loves him, perhaps ; but she is all whim. Moreover, she has many suitors ; she will not yield to his first prayer. Soon there come cruel words to him, strange sayings of this girl whom he adores. Twonnet is orphan and alone ; to her there float also all evil reports of the young Angus ; and there is none to comfort her. There are long months when they both suffer ; at last, like the white lightning, there comes upon them a knowing of the truth. It is his father, the old Angus, who has sowed these lies, that he may keep them apart.

“ Bien, the young Angus has also of the strong will. It is upon the morning of the New Year that this word comes to him. Upon that



night he has taken Twonnet, and they have crossed the ice hand in hand to St. Ignace. There the priest has made them man and wife. He has brought her back to his father in the first red of the day.

“ ‘Behold my wife, she to whom you owe of love and of honor,’ he has said. The old Angus gave him no word. Only he waited. And they tell it that the son’s face grew white as Easter snows.

“ ‘If that you will cherish her as your own, then am I still your son,’ he has spoken on. ‘Else we go now and live to you strangers. For we are one flesh. And even you, my father, shall not come between.’

“The old Angus — ah, he was brave! For love of his son he has

curbed that fierce tongue, he has tried to do his part. Yet has he of harshness with Twonnet; and she — she may not forgive those words which she believes that he has spoken. Always she strives to lead her man away; always she plans to push father and son apart, to thrust herself between. It is a pity, not so? But c'est Twonnet. And beautiful? Even as the sky at dawn."

"But, Prosper!" Benedict turned impatiently on his bunk. The grim little story had roused him strangely from his wonted apathy. "You don't mean that the man spread those lies about his own son? Or that he slandered an orphan girl, even to keep his boy? It's preposterous!"

Prosper flung both slim palms outward with a disclaiming shrug. "Who knows, M'sieu? I but tell the tale as it was brought to me. Of a truth there are many minds upon this thing; and the word passes— M'sieu! Hark!"

Above the purr of the sinking fire they heard the creak of heavy footsteps on the snow. The steps paused outside; a hand fumbled at the latch.

"Prosper! The door!"

Prosper sprang to open it; but the stranger waited not upon courtesy. The latch shrieked upward; the guest entered, bringing in a gust of icy air. He wasted no greeting on either of the men; he ducked his white head that it might not graze the beams, and stared about

the room, tranquilly curious, superbly unabashed. His tremendous body, erect as an old fir in its worn bearskins, shouldered the little room till it seemed a cabin of Lilliput. By unerring instinct, Benedict knew him for the man whose name was still warm upon their lips.

“ Sit down and have a pipe with us,” he ventured.

The stranger shook his head. “ Na, but I’ll be afther takin’ my breath in the warm,” he returned, dragging a stool to the hearth. The brogue was North Ireland ; so were the eyes, blue as dark sea-pools under gray hooded brows. But the mouth was true Scotch, harsh-hewn granite.

“ Ye’re fixed fine an’ easy here,” he went on, after a long



OLD ANGUS



silence. “Ye’re thinkin’ to hunt, I’ll warrant. But there’ll be no game left on the Island. They’re wise, the beasts. Here it do be on’y the mid of November, an’ they’re away to the mainland for pasture, while yet the first freezin’ is strong. They can smell the bitter winter. They’ll be wiser than we, the beasts.”

Prosper nipped a glowing coal in the tongs, and offered it to him. He lighted his pipe mechanically, then settled back in the warm stones of the chimney.

“Then it’s to be a hard winter?”

“The fur’ll be heavy as wool on the squirrels,” he said shortly, after a taciturn pause. “There’ll be the frost-writin’ on the trees, too, shure. If ye know the woods,

ye'll read the sign of a black Michaelmas on every bush an' twig."

Benedict laughed drowsily. This talk of the woods came to him like a lost strain of his boyhood. How many years could it be since he had tramped the Vermont hills in the glare of a freezing November sunset, his skates clinking on his shoulder, and had stopped to dig at the maple bark for a guess at the winter's length?

His eyelids fell in a sudden lethargy. Through its gray woof there flickered now and then a word from Prosper, a mutter from the woodsman; and he knew dimly that they spoke of him; yet he had no will to rebuke.

Presently he felt himself slipping down into the sleep that he had



learned to prize so dearly. He yielded with exquisite peace; yet his dulled brain heard and replied to old Angus's gruff parting word.

“So ye'll have been sick, thin! Sure ye've come to the quare place intirely to throw it off, man. But may the saints be good to ye, an' make ye whole!”

And in the deep rest that came to him, there seemed an earnest of the forester's hope.

The world was all adrift in rolling fog, thick as gray smoke, when he awoke again. Prosper bent over the fireplace; savory whiffs of bacon and boiling coffee eddied through the room. He slipped on his clothes and blundered out of doors, then halted on the step, gasping at the shock of the icy air.

“Get along, you coward!” he said savagely. He breathed deep, shuddering from head to foot; his shaken heart leaped and pounded at the strain. But he stumbled on through the creaking snow, till he reached the sandy spit which jutted out toward Sundered Island.

As yet the fog loomed soft between a shifting ashen wall. But its dull waves lightened, paling from leaden gray to pearl, from pearl to silver. Faint rainbow iridescence gleamed through its melting billows; then, like a far trumpet-note, the thinning vapor flamed to luminous gold; and in another breath it quivered, faded, vanished before the might of sunrise.

Now the Strait shone white as a floor of glass. Old Angus's cabin

on Sundered Beach stood out sharp and clear. Through this thin, deceptive air the hut seemed within a stone's throw; yet, framed in its wreath of pines, it had the pictured quality of distance. Benedict looked at it indifferently. This long sleep had blunted the memory of the night before, till its story seemed woven in his dreams.

The cabin door opened; there came out the old Angus, then a tall lad, bundled like the father in bearskins, and carrying a light pack. They were starting on a day's lumbering, probably. Benedict watched them with sudden interest. How good it would be to tramp the scented woods, to swing an axe again —

Then he looked down at his

flat, nerveless hands. He shut his teeth.

The door opened once more. The younger man looked back eagerly ; the elder turned his back with elaborate indifference, and shaded his eyes to sight across the bay.

A girl, bare-headed, wrapped in a long red cloak that made a fiery stain against the snow, came down the rough steps. The boy glanced at his father, grim figure of scorn ; then, with head bent, as in proud shame, he turned back to the girl and took her in his arms. The red cloak fell away as she put up her hands about his neck. Benedict could catch the sheen of the light on her bronze-gold braids, the white of her round arm. Without a sight of her face, he could vision the love-



TWONNET



liness which the young husband stooped to caress. And the father stood his ground, silent, aloof, unseeing.

A great unreasoning pity caught his heart. The story was so clear! Husband and wife, linked in love and closest understanding, soon to be bound by even a dearer tie; and on the verge of their fair world the father, clinging miserably to the one power vouchsafed him in his stripped defeat: the power to give pain.

“As if there was n't enough agony in the world without their pitching in to make some!” muttered Benedict. The boy had put her gently back, and turned to join the father. Perhaps his was the harsher grief, torn as

he was between the two he loved. Yet Benedict's heart went out to the older man. For sorrow is doubly sorrow to him who faces it alone.

The days slid by with eerie swiftness, a conjuror's beads upon his woven cord of shine and gloom. There were the crystal days when lake and cloud, and even island and forest, seemed built up of spun glass and glancing light, so fine, so clear, so fragile, that a breath might shatter. There were the dun days of menace, when the ice lay black beneath the heaving night of the sky, and the pines sighed like plumed mutes stooping above a bier. There were the white fog mornings, when the sunlight melted through films of rose and gold and



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DAWN

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milky violet, and to step from the cabin was to step into the heart of a vast opal. There were the hoar-frost mornings, with every twig a pearl.

To Benedict their glory was a glory dimmed and faint. He had lived too long apart from Nature to yield at once to her spell. Yet there came times when the old charm of crying winds and murmuring forest called aloud in his heart, and roused him, keen and trembling, from his torpor of despair. Then he would struggle out into the white silence, fighting his way inch by inch, hour by hour, against the weakness that dragged upon him like a poisoned cloak. Sometimes he fancied that he felt the pulses of faint returning strength

in his numb limbs; more often Prosper, lurking at a safe distance, would appear at the opportune moment and help him home, too exhausted to protest.

Once he took a gun, determined to test eye and hand in marksmanship, incidentally to bring home a brace of rabbits for supper. But his step was heavy, and his wavering grip could not keep the barrel from clashing against the bushes. The game had ample warning; not a rabbit did he see. But as he dragged painfully up a shelving beach, he caught a glimpse of a brown, sleek body, a splendid trailing brush, not forty feet away.

“A red fox — a dandy!” he gasped, bringing his rifle to bear.



“The beast knew me for a quitter”



The beast stopped, eyed him coolly ; he felt the gun jerk against his shoulder. Good Lord ! was he such a nerveless weakling that he could not muster spirit enough to aim a gun ?

The sights danced and glimmered before his eyes. He laid the piece down, took it up, laid it down again ; his hands shook like the hands of palsied age. The fox looked at him, unflinching, a moment longer ; then it turned and trotted deliberately away. Benedict clutched at the tightening cord about his head.

“The beast knew me for a quitter,” he groaned, in helpless fury. There were red sparks in his dulled eyes ; the sweat glittered about his twitching mouth. “If I can’t rule

this big whimpering whelp of a body, I'll sink it! I'll—oh, shut up, you fool, and drink it down!"

So he pushed on, clutching at every straw of hope, as a man who sinks in quicksands clutches even the frail reeds upon the bank. But there came hours when even his royal courage crouched before despair. Perhaps the struggle would have been less bitter had there been one to whom he could cry out his agony. But there was none to hear. He sat alone before the ashes of his days.

. . . . .  
"Also to-night will be the ball of the eve of Christmas at St. Ignace, M'sieu. Is it not that you would wish to attend? I am free to bring one guest. You may not

have of choice to dance, but it will be a thing magnificent to see."

Benedict smiled at the transparent hint. "Certainly you can go, Prosper. You need n't come back till after Christmas. I'll get along all right."

Curled and scented and stunning, Prosper stalked away, pouring forth vows of eternal gratitude. Benedict cooked his own supper and washed the dishes, clumsily enough, yet with a quaint pride in being able to accomplish this primitive duty. Then he took a book and settled down for a quiet evening. But the time dragged. Prosper's chatter was tedious enough; but even tedious things have their ballast of compensation.

Presently warmth and silence

had their will. The book slid from his hands; he drifted comfortably into the doze which came nowadays, instead of the torpor of the months past. Yet he slept soundly, for shouts and blows on the heavy door did not arouse him. Not till old Angus burst the latch from its casing and hurled himself into the room did he awaken.

“In God’s name, man, have ye no ears? Come!”

Old Angus’s grip shut fiercely on his shoulder. The terror in the old man’s voice startled him more than the rough summons.

“What’s up, McAlister? Anything happened?”

“‘Anything happened?’” McAlister’s voice rose in a shriek. He stood trembling from head to foot;



he snatched at Benedict's hands with an anguished gesture. "Happened, is it? Here's me boy, gone to the mainland the mornin' for to get a bit Christmas for Twonnet. He'll be back to-morra, he says, for the big cracks make it dangerous, crossin' the Strait by night. To-night Nanna must fall on the steps, an' scream for the scare of it. She'll not be hurted, but the noise an' the cry has frightened Twonnet, an' — Man, her Hour is come! Ye're a docther; go back to her, whiles I find my son. For if she slips away whiles he is from her, there'll be no livin' left for him, — nor me."

"I'll go to the mainland with you," said Benedict, hoarsely. "We'll bring a doctor from there."

Nonsense, I can't take a case like that. Good Lord, man, you don't know what you're asking! Look here." He thrust his twitching hands before the other's face. "I'm sick, I tell you. I wouldn't risk it for the world. What if I killed her? It's no more than likely. Let me alone, I say. I won't. I can't!"

"Ye've got to go!" the old voice shrilled out, frantic. "Bring a mainland doctor? The breath will be gone from her by midnight, man. I'm all that's left to care for her, an' now she'll die on my hands — me, what's grieved and thwarted her all her days. But niver did I say the word that was brought to her. Niver! I'm a hard man, but God forbid that I

“speak one lyin’ word again’ a helpless woman, though she’s stole the heart of me life. But she’d niver believe but that I’d spoke it. An’ my brute pride wouldna let me tell her the truth. She’s come a’tween me an’ my son” — his voice broke in a great sob — “but I’d give him up to her, body an’ soul, if I could forget the harsh words I’ve spoke her, an’ she in the face of her Time. An’ oh, the brave heart of her! The brave heart of her!”

They stumbled on across the ridged ice, gripping each other mechanically. Benedict’s heart pounded and quivered; but for the old man’s grasp, he would have pitched over again and again.

“We don’t need to stop here!”

he gasped as they reached McAlister's cabin. "Let's go on. We have n't a minute to spare."

"Ye have n't a minute to spare, ye mean," said the old man, roughly. "Hush, now!" For Benedict, frenzied at his unspoken demand, was praying and commanding in a breath. "Ye'll go to her an' ye'll do yir best. No human being can do more. Man!" The furious protests died on Benedict's lips at that note of agony. "Her life lies in yir hands now. An' my soul goes out if ye lose it!"

He thrust Benedict inside the door and plunged away. The ring of his footsteps on the ice echoed a moment, then was gone.

Benedict stood staring at the fire. The room eddied and swam

in darkling circles. He reeled on the brink of panic. The horror of his impotence, the shame of his collapse, swept over him in drowning waves. The old man's cry beat in shrieking echoes upon his brain:

“Her life—in your hands—  
And my soul!”

All at once his frantic terror subsided; he lashed his staggering wits into line with the whip of merciless will. “It's no good trying to bolt,” he found himself saying, very quietly, as though he strove to hearten another. “There's no way out. Either you pull up— or they lose her. You're up against it. Go on. Keep your whip-handle. You're half blind, that's a fact. And your hands are no

good. And your nerve's gone. But you're up against it. Go on. Go on!"

Through the black hour that followed, the words swung like a steadying weight within his brain. But soon they melted from his thought, forgotten. And thus he forgot all things save this task that he must do.

He was no longer racked with pity for the old man in his horror of remorse. He had no thought for the poor young husband stumbling on through the darkness, and clutching to his breast the pitiful little gift which his love might never see. He was a machine once more, splendid, unerring, pitiless. Old Nanna, still dazed by her fall, yet wise in her obedience, stood to his quiet



In the gray of the Christmas morning, he knew himself  
conqueror





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DAWN

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orders; and side by side, through the endless night, together they fought with Death.

In the gray of the Christmas morning, he knew himself conqueror. He laid the baby in her arms, and smiled back at her pale delight. Then he slipped from the cabin to the wide, dark silence. The lake was a black shield; the stars hung poised and trembling, mysteriously bright, on a high auroral sky.

Up the beach crept two dusky figures, reeling, exhausted, hurrying, hurrying on. Benedict did not recognize them. He was not relaxed to the point where his thoughts could reach beyond that shadowed room. Yet when young Angus gripped his arm, his face a

wrung mask of dread, he answered him with swift reassurance :

“ Everything ’s all right. Go in, but keep quiet. She ’s waiting for you.”

Old Angus, haggard, shame-stricken, caught the low word. He sank on the bench outside the door ; his rough head fell in the covert of his arms.

Benedict laid his hand lightly on his shoulder. “ Brace up, McAlister. Can’t you face good news? Besides, she ’ll be wanting you in a minute, too.”

“ Wantin’ me !” The old man stood up ; his hard face broke and quivered. “ An’ why should she be afther wantin’ me, the man who has teased an’ harrid her, who’s grudged her her happiness — ”

His voice trailed away into silence. For through the half-open door came a low summons. Twonnet's voice; no longer edged with taunt, sweet with the ineffable sweetness of her mother-joy.

“Is it that you will not come to behol' your gift of Christmas, this little Angus, mon père, mon ami ?”

Benedict laughed out tenderly as the old man, struck to the heart, turned and blundered in. The sound recalled some vague harassing thought. A recollection?—a fantasy?

He pressed his hands against his head. What was that dream that had haunted him last night, many nights, of a knotted thong that bound him, ever tightening? For

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DAWN

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now he knew no pain ; and his thoughts followed one upon another, marshalled, orderly. He picked a dry leaf from the oak near by and looked at it intently. The tracery of veins, the shadings fine as a moth's wing, were clear to his sight as though etched in steel. He walked a few rods ; his steps rang clear and steady upon the frozen ground.

Then a great, quiet wonder came upon him. He stopped and looked down at his bare, outstretched hands. And they were calm.

He turned to the low kindling East. A light wind sighed and drifted ; softly the pines intoned their high rejoicing chant. He looked deep into the crystal of the miracle : his lost life, given back to

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DAWN

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him entire and perfect, its every noble power his to use once more. The craft of cunning hand; the majesty of sight; the supreme might of trained, unshaken brain, strong, confident, unfailing. It was all his, this prince's inheritance. Ah, gift of gifts, the strength to toil once more!

And over the ramparts of the hills, hushed in the peace of victory, lifted the white oriflamme of the Day.













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