

in the crowd a woman sobbed hysterically, and now all eyes were strained to see the uprising carriage.

When at last it came to view a dozen volunteers rushed forward to help the returned man. Birchhoff, as erect as a soldier, stood on the platform supporting in his arms the unconscious form of Henry Coughlan. Those who would assist him he waved back with a stern brusqueness. Blackened and burnt with the subterranean flames, his hair and beard singed to a crisp, there was yet a certain nobility in his mien as he walked erect with his burden and laid it at Coughlan's feet.

Mrs. Coughlan took her son's head in her lap and kissed his pale and smoke-grimed face with rapture.

'Thank God! Thank God!' she exclaimed, 'he is not dead! Heaven will bless you for this noble act!' And then bending over her son, she smoothed his hair, matted with the singeing blaze, and wept with mingled joy and sympathy.

'My man—' began the mine-owner; but Birchhoff interrupted him with an imperious gesture.

'It is a present,' he said—'a holiday present, to you and her—from the people. We have given you the life of your son; we only ask that you give to us a little work—a little bread—a little—we ask—'

He swayed and fell like a log, his fingers clutching at the featherly snow, and he muttering weakly: 'It is a present—a little work—for the people!'—'Catholic World Magazine.'

PETERSEN'S PRICE.

Little Mrs. Hargrave, just six months married, and with all her worldly goods packed in a box-car, was moving to a small town in Michigan, to which her beloved John had already been called by business. This town, she learned on her arrival, boasted but one vehicle capable of transporting her numerous belongings from the station to the new home, and this rickety affair, drawn by a broken-winded horse, belonged to a Swedish drayman named Olaf Petersen.

'Be sure,' John Hargrave, wise in city ways, had said to his young wife at parting, 'to make your bargain beforehand with the van driver. Otherwise he'll probably overcharge you outrageously; they always do. It cost me exactly fifteen dollars to get all our stuff from the house to the car.'

'I'll do my best,' promised Lucy.

'I'm sorry I can't look after it for you,' said John, stooping to kiss her, 'but I've got to stay in town all day. Remember, Lucy, make your bargain first, and don't consent to paying more than fifteen dollars.'

But when inexperienced Lucy broached the subject of charges to Olaf Petersen, all that stolid Scandinavian would say was:

'Vell, I don't know, meesis. I can't tole you yooost vat I schorge you until I got my yob feenish. I tole you then.'

This of course did not please Mrs. Hargrave, but Petersen, stolid, obstinate, and immovable, had nothing more definite to offer. As his ancient chariot was the only visible connecting link between the station and the Hargrave house, the young woman was obliged to make the best of an unsatisfactory condition.

But she began to worry at once. Petersen's cold, light-blue eyes, as the young woman pointed out with much perturbation to her mother-in-law, wore a shrewd, crafty expression, and his heavy jaw, large nose and firm mouth were, she declared, clearly indicative of stubbornness.

How was she, a little scrap of a brown-eyed woman, afraid of a mouse, to drive any sort of a bargain with a great burly swindler like that? It made her simply ill, she declared, to think of it.

The moving began. The narrow dray, far advanced in its second childhood, sloped toward the rear so much that the carrying of anything on casters was a precarious matter. The distance fortunately was short, a matter of less than three blocks.

Petersen, with a long-legged, silent assistant to keep the furniture from sliding off the rear end of the slanting dray, started in at 7 o'clock the morning of Mrs. Hargrave's arrival. Necessarily the loads were exceedingly small, consisting in many instances of one solitary article, such as a couch, a buffet, a table, or a big arm-chair.

'My goodness,' exclaimed Lucy, 'if that man is charging us by the load it will take a small fortune to get that carload of stuff moved to the house. John'll never forgive me if it costs more than fifteen dollars; besides, twenty is every cent I have. Oh, do you think it will take more than twenty?'

'Perhaps,' suggested the elder Mrs. Hargrave, 'he works by the hour. I've never moved, so I don't know how they figure.'

'That would be even worse. That wretched old horse creeps like a rheumatic snail. At this rate it'll be midnight before he gets through. I'm having him leave everything on the ground floor, because I can't

risk delaying him a moment by having things carried upstairs. Hadn't I better tell him that twenty dollars is the very last cent I'll pay? He's just making those loads small on purpose. There he comes now with John's desk!'

'No,' advised the older woman, 'let John settle with him when it's all done. You're no match for a great hulking pirate like that Petersen. He made up his mind to rob you, and he'll do it; you can see it all over his face.'

All day long, with a barely perceptible pause at noon the weary, shambling, short-winded horse crawled miserably back and forth with insignificant, under-sized burdens. All day long Petersen laboriously loaded and unloaded his groaning dray. All day long the shiftless assistant, with his blue-overalled legs trailing in the dust, rode at the end of the vehicle to keep the loads aboard, while Petersen led, drove, or supported his raw-boned horse. All day long Mrs. Hargrave counted the trips, marking them down on paper.

The worried young housekeeper thought that Petersen's working day would end at six o'clock, but it did not. As at noon, the interval between loads was merely a trifle longer than usual.

Twilight deepened and night fell. Petersen still labored, the horse still crawled, the assistant with dangling legs still assisted, the dray still threatened to drop to pieces as it rattled up and down the otherwise quiet street, and Mrs. Hargrave and her mother-in-law still industriously counted the loads.

'It'll take every cent of thirty-five dollars!' groaned Lucy at nine o'clock, extricating a rocking-chair from the heap and dropping disconsolately into it. 'Oh, I do wish John would come, but I know he'll just hate me when he does! I wish I were dead!'

'His train won't be in for an hour yet,' said the older Mrs. Hargrave, endeavoring to conceal her own anxiety. But don't worry, Lucy. I can lend you ten dollars if you and John together haven't enough.'

'Ten won't be a drop in the bucket!' groaned Mrs. Hargrave forlornly. 'Two men, a horse and a dray for fourteen hours, and the end is not yet. He means to make us pay for the men and the horse at so much an hour, and for the loads at so much a load. And look at this house! Not a single room settled, and goodness only knows where the bedclothes are! It's taken all my time to count the loads.'

'Mine, too,' admitted her mother-in-law.

At a quarter after ten John arrived, viewed the heaped-up furniture, heard the story, and ruefully fished a handful of change out of his pocket. His naturally cheerful countenance had grown dismal. Lucy held her breath.

'Three dollars and forty-two cents is all I've got,' said John. 'I don't want to find fault, Lucy, but I do think you might have made some better arrangement with the man. That shark will just skin us alive.'

It is probable that Lucy would have wept at that point if the shark had not staggered wearily in at the front door with a piano leg under one arm and a clothes wringer under the other.

'Vell,' remarked the drayman, adding these articles to the already tottering heap, 'I tank I vor all trew vit my job, tank goodness!'

'Now, Mr. Petersen,' said John, putting on a bold front, 'how much do I owe you?'

'Velf,' responded Petersen, 'it vor an awful hard day's work—yooost awful hard.'

'How much,' demanded John, firmly, 'do you want?'

'I vork, an' my horse she's vork, an' my man she's vork since seven by the clock.'

The Hargraves waited, but Petersen's tongue was slower than his horse.

'Well?,' urged John, impatiently.

'I have vom man hired to hellup me all day, an' of course I have got to pay heem she's vages.'

'I understand,' said John.

'My horse she vor dead tired on she's legs—her vas neffer before so tired as now,' continued Petersen, mildly reproachful. 'I tank I have to buy linament for she's legs.'

'That's too bad,' returned John coldly. 'I'm sorry for the horse, but we didn't agree to pay damages or replenish any live stock. Now how much do you want for moving that furniture? I warn you that I won't submit to being robbed.'

'Vell,' said Petersen, scratching his head reflectively, 'I tank maybe you vas going to kick on my price, but it won't do you no goot, for I von't shange my price for nobotty. I makes my own price an' I sticks by heem, an' I von't not shange heem. Maybe you tank she vor too much, but I vill not—'

'How much is it?,' demanded John, Lucy, and John's mother simultaneously. The strain was becoming unbearable.

'Fife dollar an' seffenty-five cents altogether,' replied Petersen firmly.—'Youth's companion.'