

peated, as his gaze again riveted itself upon the beautiful face he had attempted to save from oblivion. 'This woman has forgotten how to pray. And my wife, thank God, would never have forgotten. It is I who did not remember; and, therefore, the shadow-life I sought to win her to share with me was the idlest of dreams. My ideal fell short of the reality. Had she lived, she would have been more beautiful than I have painted her; had she lived, I would have been a different and a better man.'

He flung himself into a chair, folded his arms, and dropped his head upon his breast. So he might have portrayed 'Remorse,' or 'Vain Regret.'

There was a tense silence. Elizabeth hesitated, perplexed and distressed. After a moment, however, she crossed the room swiftly, and her kind hand touched his arm. 'Mr. Norton, you will yet make the picture a true portrait of your beautiful wife,' she said in a voice that thrilled with womanly sympathy. 'And—and—you know, while we live, it is never too late for us to become better than we are.'

Then, signalling to Mammy, who, forgotten, had watched the little drama in stupid forgetment, Miss Van Ruyter went quietly out of the studio.—'Catholic World.'

A GENEROUS ACTION

As the train began to pull out of the station an old, white-haired Negro hurried across the platform and swung himself on the rear car. 'He was very black and very dusty, and the individual occupants of seats looked a little apprehensive as he shuffled diffidently through the car. But he did not offer to sit down. When he reached the opposite end he took hold of a seat to steady himself, and gazed around curiously; his big, wondering eyes roving from face to face with the eager intentness of a child. Evidently he was tired, very tired, for his shoulders began to slope and every few minutes he shifted his feet as though they hurt him.

At last a young man lowered his newspaper. 'Here is a seat, uncle,' he called. 'You look tired.'

The Negro shuffled forward eagerly.

'Yes, sah; t'ank yo', sah!' he said gratefully as he sank down. 'I'se plumb beat. Done walk mon's rous long way dis yer mawnin'. Yo' see,' as the young man folded his paper and slipped it into his pocket, 'Marse Henery an' me lib ober in Prince George County, an' larst weeek Marse Henery he up an' die. Dat lef' me by myse'f.'

'I see. And you are going South to look for work?'

'No, sah! Goin' back home—goin' back ter old Georgy.' Into his eyes came a look of eager expectation, and he stroked the back of the seat softly, as though it was his old home in far-away Georgia.

'I ain't been dar in mos' thutty year,' he went on slowly; 'not sence de Linkum men tock we all's niggers. Dar war a whole passle ob 'em, but dey all done bruk away. Den de Sheriff sol' de plantation, an' dar wa'n't nutten lef' we all but de Nori. We blegged ter hab money ter lib.'

'And you stuck by Marse Henery?'

The old Negro looked at him in surprise. 'Ob co'se,' he answered simply. 'I'se de body sarbent, an' Marse Henery couldn't git 'long 'thout me. He's a gen'laman, an' 'pended on bein' tuk car' ob. But I'se blegged to be 'way in de day time, ca'se I'se 'a cyarpenter an' stonemason, an' allers hab plenty wuk.'

'What did Marse Henery do?'

'Marse Henery?' indignantly. 'Why, he's gen'laman, I tells yo'! He ain't do nutten! He ain't nebber learn do tings like common w'ite fo'ks. He hab niggers for dat.'

'You don't mean to say that you have supported him ever since the war?'

The old negro drew himself up with unconscious dignity.

'Yo' goin' talk like dat I ain't nutten mo' t' say.'

'I beg your pardon,' said the young man hastily. 'Please go on.' The black face relaxed.

'Yo' ain't know Marse Henery,' commiseratively, 'so yo' don' un'stan'. Ob co'se I wuk for him. Ain't he car' for me befo' de wah? What niggers good for but work, I like know?'

A boy came through the car with a basket of sandwiches. The young man bought two and handed them to his companion. The old Negro's eyes glistened.

'T'ank yo', massa! T'ank yo', sah!' he said gratefully. 'I didn' hab no breakfas', an' money's too skase ter buy t'ings on de road. I war 'lowin' ter lil up arter I done reach Georgy.'

A few minutes later there was a slight ripple through the car. The conductor had entered and was calling for tickets.

The young man produced his and held it in readiness. The Negro fumbled anxiously through several pockets, and finally remembered that he had pinned his to his hat-lining.

'Done tuk every cent I could scrape up ter 'buy dat,' he said triumphantly, as he produced it. 'But das all right. I kin wuk, an' fo'ks don' need money w'en dey's home. Money's for trabblin'.'

In the seat behind them was a shabbily-dressed woman, whose face had an anxious, frightened expression. Crowded on the seat beside her were several bundles, and in her arms was a white-faced, big-eyed baby. When the conductor touched her shoulder she started uneasily.

'Ticket, please.'

A red flush of shame spread over her face; then it disappeared, leaving her white and dogged. 'I haven't any.'

The conductor grew stern. 'Very well. If you get off at the next station it will save us the trouble of putting you off,' and he turned to the opposite seat.

The woman's eyes grew big with terror as she sprang up and caught him by the arm.

'Don't do that, sir! For God's sake, don't put me off!' she implored, hoarsely. 'I've got to go! My husband has written for me to come. If there was time I would walk, but he's—he's dying'; and a great sob rose to her white lips, but was resolutely choked back. 'I tried to raise money,' lowering her voice so that the other passengers could not hear, 'but I couldn't. We sold everything we had so that he could go South, as the doctor ordered. And now he's—oh, my God! my God!' She raised her arms despairingly and sank weakly back into her seat.

'Where do you wish to go?' asked the conductor kindly.

'Thomasville, Georgia.'

The old Negro started. 'Why, dat's my place, an' this ticket will take her,' he whispered to the young man.

'I'm sorry, madam,' the conductor said, 'after a slight hesitation, but I can do nothing. We have but one rule. You must pay or get off. I'm a poor man myself, and can't risk breaking the rules. I might lose my situation. Ticket, please.'

The Negro hung his head.

'I'se feared yo'll hab ter put me off, too, boss,' he said humbly. 'I'se got sebenty-two cents. If dat'll count for anyting—'

'Off at the next station!' broke in the conductor harshly. 'We'll be there in a couple of minutes now. If it wasn't so near I'd stop the train and put you off. This poor woman has some excuse, but you—bah!'

The young man was about to make a protest, but something in his companion's face restrained him.

Before the conductor reached the end of the car the speed began to slacken. The old Negro arose.

'Reckon I'd better be leavin',' he said to the young man. 'T'ank yo' ag'in for de sandwiches, an' I hopes yo'll 'member me kin'ly. Here, misty,' turning to the woman, who was gazing stonily from the window, and dropping his ticket into her lap; 'here's yo' ticket. I reckon yo' done drap hit.' And before she could realise the meaning of his action he had shuffled half-way to the door.

The young man rose as though he would call him back; then he seemed to think better of it, for he sat down and gazed moodily from the window. Perhaps he was thinking of his long journey and the dear one depending on him. Possibly he remembered that his own pocketbook was in nearly as bad a condition as the Negro's. When the train began to move slowly from the station he once more unfolded his newspaper, but the woman behind him noticed that he was holding it upside down.—Exchange.

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