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EVERYDAY COURAGE.

BY ETHEL WRIGHT.

"Polite," grumbled Lieutenant Willoughby to himself as he entered the hallway of his friends apartment in response to a summons bawled out from some part of the interior. "What? Breaking up?" the caller asked, peering through a lighted doorway. He had been obliged to announce himself in some way, for the occupant of the room sat on the floor with his back to the entrance and evidenced no intention of turning to greet his visitor.

"Scott, your manners are beastly," was the intruder's next remark as he threaded his way through the maze of household wreckage that made ingress difficult. At this the broad shoulders turned quickly, and in a moment Scott was shaking his friend's hand in a manner so hearty that Willoughby forgave the boorishness of his first greeting.

"Sit down, old man, if you can find a place. Yes, we are breaking up, as you call it," and the speaker swept his arms in a hopeless way over the confusion of books, pictures and bachelor bric-a-brac.

"Where is 'the boy'?" asked the caller.

"Cleared out," was Scott's short reply as he turned to light his pipe and rummage about for another for his friend.

"You haven't quarreled, have you?" Willoughby inquired quickly, for when he left the city a year ago Scott and "the boy" had just taken the apartment that was now being dismantled, and the two were apparently settled for some time.

"How long have you been in town?" Scott asked instead of answering Willoughby's question.

"Got here at 3 o'clock. I had to stop at Washington yesterday to make a report and came over this morning. I tell you it's good to get back even for thirty days. The fun of soldiering in Cuba is all over. There is nothing but manual labor to do there now." Then he added after a moment's hesitation. "I wouldn't have left, though, on any other errand than the one that brought me here."

"Official, I suppose?"

"No," replied Willoughby; "on the contrary, quite the reverse."

Scott mumbled something and looked so absurdly unhappy that the young soldier laughed outright.

"What is the trouble, old man? Has some one bothered you with a retainer? You say Harrison has cleared out. What is it all about? Don't sit there looking at me in that lugubrious fashion. Out with it."

"The boy and I haven't quarreled," Scott answered after a few futile pulls at his pipe. "I jawed him a bit for leaving me with these confounded rooms on my hands, but there was no row. He has changed his plans—living over in Jersey somewhere—Cranford, I believe."

"Oh, Cranford," was the lieutenant's observation, seemingly to himself, as he recalled that the object of his errand lived at the "next stop." "And that's what makes you so glum is it?"

"Not exactly." Scott spoke now with the tone of a man who has formed a resolution to perform a hateful duty. "If you will find a seat somewhere and light that pipe, I'll tell you about it. Fact is, my boy, you are in this story in a way."

Willoughby's expression was a composite of mystification and uneasiness, but he only waved his hand as a signal that his friend should proceed. This was just what he did not seem ready to do.

"For heaven's sake, if you have anything to say," Willoughby finally remarked peevishly, "say it!"

"Harrison is going to marry Miss Mead," Scott said suddenly, being careful, however, not to look at his listener. When he had imparted this information, he seemed to be able to go ahead without any further delay. "I'll tell you how it happened—the engagement, I mean. The boy has known her for a long time; ever since he came to New York. First girl he ever met, and he was in love with her from the moment he was introduced. Says he was, anyway. But Harrison, you know is a queer sort of a chap. Has no idea of his worth and all that. He isn't half 'pushful' enough to get along in this world with men, let alone women. He thought Miss Mead would never look at him, and I suppose she took him at his owh valuation. Women are apt to do that, you know. At any rate, he made no progress. You know what I mean.

I am telling you the results of my observations. Harrison never said anything about it."

"Well, after Miss Mead met you at Tampa last year the boy's chances seemed to dwindle to nothing."

"It seems to me you are making a long story of it," said Willoughby. "Can't you cut it?"

"Better let me go on, I guess. Now I've told you how the case stood when Miss Mead came North last year."

The listener made another move to protest against the form the narrative had taken, but realizing that his tormentor knew no other way of telling what he had made up his mind to say Willoughby settled back again.

"Three or four months after we had been reading in the newspapers about your work in Cuba, Harrison was drawn on a jury." A groan from Willoughby announced his dispair at this new digression, but Scott went on without a pause:

"You will see the connection latter. I helped him kill time while he waited to be called, and when he was finally drawn I was there as regularly as the judge. I have forgotten the title of the case they put him on. It was the heirs of somebody against a man named Stevens, who held a lot of property that was claimed by the heirs under a will. Stevens claim under a deed, and the suit was brought to set aside the deed on the ground that it was obtained by fraud.

"When the lawyers on each side went through the form of asking the jurymen if they knew any of the interested parties to the suit, I saw Harrison shake his head in a bored way. To cut this part short, Miss Mead walked into the courtroom on the second day of the trial. Harrison told me afterward that he knew in an instant that she was interested in the case. Before he left the box that day he asked to be allowed to see one of the exhibits, and, reading the caption, he found that his intuition had been correct. I believe Miss Mead had been made a party to the suit after it had been begun in a lower court, and her name did not appear in the list which the lawyers read when they polled the jury.

"We talked the matter over that evening, and of course I advised the boy to explain to the court that he had discovered since the trial began that he was aquainted with one of the plaintiffs in the case. I have not been able to make up my mind as to why he insisted upon going on with the trial. I explained to him that it was a very risky thing to do. He always was bullheaded, though, when he made up his mind.

"Miss Mead did not come to the courtroom again until the last day of trial. The lawyers strung it out for two weeks. It was a very close case. I could never have decided it either way. It had been fought by skilled lawyers from the start, and they had succeeded in keeping everything off the record that would throw light on the questions at issue. There were something like $20,000 or $30,000 in it for each of the heirs under the will. These heirs were nieces of the orignal beneficiary, but that hasn't anything to do with this story. Miss Mead is not rich, I believe," the narrator added reflectively.

"As I have told you, Miss Mead was on hand to hear the lawyers sum up on the last day of the trial. She took good care not to sit where Harrison could see her, but he passed within ten inches of her when the 12 men filed out to the jury room. It was a long, uneasy wait for me while that jury 'deliberated,' as the newspapers say. Harrison was the foreman and when he got up to deliver the verdict I could feel my heart beating 'way up in my throat.'"

"Go on, go on," Willoughby urged as Scott paused at the recollection of how his heart acted on the occasion.

"Well, the jury decided against the heirs at every point. Stevens had several deeds and every one was sustained. The heirs didn't get a shilling. Miss Mead had left the room by the time the jury was discharged."

"By Jove!" inanely remarked the listener.

"Yes, sir, and Harrison told me he had a hard time persuading two of the jurymen to decide against the—against her."

"But I don't quite see," Willoughby began.

"Of course you don't, my brave soldier boy. I am coming to that now.

"Harrison, mind you, had not seen Miss Mead for the two weeks, except on those two days during the trial, and he did not hurry about calling after the verdict. I think that it was a week later that we all met at the theater, a great piece of luck for the boy. I can't tell you exactly how they straightened the matter out. Perhaps it didn't need any straightening, but way back in the box toward the end of the show I heard Miss Mead say, half soberly and half laughingly, 'There are all sorts of courage,' and when we got home."—

"I think that's enough, Scott, if you don't mind. Where can I find the sailing of the Havana boat?"

"I was afraid of that," said Scott.—*St. Louis Republic.*

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