



LITERARY



THE PROPHECY



LOOK AT THIS. Here's something queer." Clayborne looked up from the evening paper and then went on to read: "'Two hunters, stumbling upon a cabin in Redwell's Gulch yesterday found there the dead body of an old man. There was no apparent cause for death except old age. On a table near the dead man was found a paper on which was written, 'The prophecy is fulfilled.' The body when found had been dead a day or more.'"

"I should hardly call it queer," said Dustin, coolly.

"Lots of men die from old age."

"Yes, but look at this." Again Clayborne thoughtfully read, "'On a table near the dead man was found a paper on which was written, 'The prophecy is fulfilled.''" "Don't you think that queer, Besoird?"

We turned to our host. He had been curiously silent the whole evening, when of all evenings he should have been elated. He had received a magnificent ovation at his appearance on the stage the night before, and had been declared "the greatest violinist of the century" by critics and the public alike. It was to celebrate the occasion that we, a few of his friends, were, at his invitation, spending the evening with him. We had just been discussing his wonderful technique and thought that perhaps modesty had been the reason for his reticence. Now, as we looked to him for an answer, we noticed a strange, fixed look in his eyes. Suddenly realizing that we were regarding him, he started slightly and drew his hand across his eyes as if to brush away an unruly lock of hair.

"What did you say that paper—" he began abruptly. "Oh, yes—. Well, no; I don't think it is queer. That is, not exactly *queer*. Many prophecies are fulfilled I believe."

"Surely you don't believe in prophecies," Clayborne burst out impetuously, "why, that's all rot, you know."

Besoird stared moodily into the fire. "Is it?" he said slowly. "Perhaps. I wish I knew." His voice had sunk almost to a whisper and as he ended he drew his breath in sharply. Wondering, we watched him while he walked over to the window, opened it and looked out. Suddenly he turned. "I am not very good company tonight, am I?" he asked seriously, "but wait. I'll tell you an interesting— no, a— well, just a story.



See what you think of it. No," as Clayborne drew a chair nearer the fire, "I would rather stand here where I can see the sky and the outside."

* * * * *

You remember two years ago when we went hunting and I got lost in the mountains. I told you afterward that an old trapper found me and put me right; well, that was a lie. I never saw a trapper. But at the end of the second day I stumbled upon a little cabin set in behind a big rock. Half fainting with hunger and fatigue I crawled to the door and vainly struggled with the latch. It was opened from the inside and I fell forward across the doorway. Dimly I remember being lifted to a chair and something hot being forced down my throat. Some time later, I don't know how long, when I opened my eyes, the first thing I noticed was the portrait of a beautiful woman. I can't tell what made her beautiful. I didn't notice the color of her eyes or hair. You'll just have to take my word for it. And yet there was something else beside beauty in her portrait, something not so pleasing. Wondering I turned my head and looked about me.

An old man, evidently a hermit, was watching me closely. In his face there was a look of intelligence and refinement and something more—doubt, or perhaps fear. His eyes, the most wonderful I have ever seen, fairly blazed out upon me. Their almost startling blackness was heightened by his long white beard and white hair and eyebrows, till they



glowed with an intensity that seemed to reflect many conflicting emotions. Deep, glowing, mysterious, they were what I imagine black diamonds would look like. A long, thin nose, with sensitive nostrils distended, also revealed the passing of some strong emotion, whether of distrust or fear I could not tell.

Seeing that I was awake he quietly turned to get me something to eat. When he again faced me his countenance was calm and reposed, with no sign of agitation. As he set out a simple meal I noticed his hands, white and thin, with long, tapering fingers. He used them with an indescribable grace that fascinated me. Presently he spoke.

"How did *you* get here?" His peculiar emphasis on the word "you" made me wonder if he thought he knew me.

I told him I was lost.

"But you—Besoird. You are Besoird, aren't you?" He hesitated. "Damarel's pupil. Oh," seeing my amazement, "I know you. I am not entirely ignorant of the world and its affairs. I, too, am a violinist."

If he had been any other than the man he was, I should have laughed. To have an old hermit, out in the woods, calmly look at me and say, "I, too, am a violinist." But simply and unaffectedly as he said it, I believed it. Besides, he had almost supernaturally spoken my name and coupled it with that of my old master, long since dead. So, instead of expressing any wonder I humbly asked: "Will you play for me?"

"Not now," he said, "but I will show you my violin."

He took down a battered old leather case and opened it, disclosing a violin of peculiar shape and construction, one in a thousand.

"Damarel's violin," I whispered involuntarily.





"You remember it, then?" said my host, as he lifted the instrument from its case.

Yes, I remember it, that wonderful, mysterious, much fought-over violin. It was a violin never to be forgotten. There had been a vague rumor of a prophecy connected with it, a prophecy that the violin would be the means of determining the greatest violinist of the century, that it would finally be possessed and played by the master player. Since Damarel had so completely disappeared, the violin had been neither seen nor heard of. Some had construed its disappearance as proof of Damarel's mastery. And now—think, if you can, what must have been my feelings—here it was in an old cabin in the mountains, within an arm's reach of me.

"How—where did you get that?" I faltered.

"He left it with me. I was his friend," he replied. "I was with him when he died." His tone somehow seemed to reproach me for not having been with "him."

"When he died," I repeated slowly. "No, I was not with him. How was I to know?"

"Oh, I understand. I do not reproach you. After all, what does it matter to me? But he spoke of you. He didn't want you to think badly of him. He wanted you to know why he killed himself?" I suddenly felt rather than saw, the hermit's eyes regarding me. "I wonder—what did you think of him?"





"I thought he was wonderful—before. Far too wonderful, too big, to do what he did." I went on heedlessly, my feelings getting the better of me. "A suicide. That was weak." I realized, even as I spoke, how foolish I must have sounded—I, pretending to judge, and to the friend of the man I was condemning, a man old enough to be my father. When the hermit raised his troubled eyes to me, I wished fervently that I had the power of recalling my words, for I knew I had expressed only the conventional judgment of society.

In some way he must have read my thoughts, for he said: "Yes, I know that is what the world thinks. A coward! But he thought—he hoped—that you wouldn't think so. Perhaps you wouldn't if you knew why he did it. I am sure he would like you to know. I'll tell you why."

He stopped a moment, maybe to reconsider, perhaps to recollect.



"You knew Damarel well enough to know how sensitive he was and how strong were his emotions. All his life he felt and rebelled against the shallowness and artificiality of life. He was offensive to most people; for that matter, most people were offensive to him. So that when, at last, he did fall in love, his love was almost a religion with him. He forgot his bitterness against the world in his happiness, for the girl returned his affection. For a time he was very happy. Then—" the hermit turned his head from me and his voice, when he spoke again, was low, "he noticed a misunderstanding growing between them. The girl was jealous of his art, the attention he paid to it, and the part it played in his life. Finally, she quarreled openly with him and refused even to see him. On the night of his last concert, just before he had sent asking her forgiveness, he



received a note from her. It was an announcement of her engagement to another man, a former suitor." My host looked at me. "You know how he played that night. He gave the world all he could. He put all his skill, all his art into that one brief hour. And his audience understood and appreciated. That night he, too, was declared the 'greatest violinist of the century.' But he died." A silence followed which I neither dared nor wished to interrupt. Then—"you are now the world's idol," he said, 'the greatest violinist of the century.' I wonder if you are. I would like—" An idea seemed suddenly to come to him and his voice trailed off into silence as he walked to the door.

"Come here," he said presently. With Damarel's violin in one hand

and leading me with the other, he left the cabin and came out upon an open place from which he could view the mountains far on the opposite side of the valley. Through the valley, itself a soft black mass of pine trees in the failing light, a bluish mist marked the course of a stream. At a little distance beyond the creek on the far side, a cliff arose grandly, overtopping the rest of the peaks. The light of the setting sun lingered just enough to trace its glowing outline against the sky.

My host quietly placed Damarel's violin in my hands. "Play," he commanded. "That is Nature, that is—God."

I don't know what I played, but I'm sure I was inspired. I don't believe another violin like that one ever existed. Its sonorous tone held me enthralled. And yet, the whole time I was conscious of a lack of





something. Ah, my friends, it was not "technique" that I lacked. The icy perfections with which I dazzle my audiences seemed useless, even childish. It was soul. The thought flashed over me that somehow my music was like the woman in the portrait. It was not "of the mountains." It was not *big* enough. And yet it was wonderful. It could not help but be. I was playing on Damarel's violin.

When I finished the light had died out of the sky, the cliff arose, a black, shapeless mass in a dark blue vault, and a silence almost audible in its perfect calmness had settled over the whole valley.

For a moment after I had handed it to him the hermit held the violin in his arms, motionless. Then he raised it to his shoulder and played—a haunting, compelling melody like nothing I had ever heard before. Oh, how I wish that you who go into raptures when I play, could have heard him as he stood there in the dark, playing — to God.

Were you ever out in the mountains, with all the awfulness of an untamed wilderness almost smothering you; the moon, cold and clear, lighting up the immense vastness; the stars, little points of steel piercing the dark blue of the sky; the cliffs, sacred temples, loftily defying time; and the mountains, everywhere the mountains, crouching over against the skyline, rising up on all sides, majestic, magnificent, remorseless? Haven't you ever felt how small, how worthless, how insignificant you were in God's world? Ah, that's what the music told, and





more, hunger, loneliness, sorrow, the strains of the violin rising and falling in sobbing reverberations. And then softer and clearer, it told of resignation, of peace, and of strength. Only once after that did it change, rising more and more powerfully in a piercing wail, like the cry of a trapped animal.



Then he stopped and the echo returned faintly, like the remembrance of a song. In the silence that followed I stood breathless and tense, conjecturing, wondering. Slowly and without effort the understanding came to me. This was not the first time I had heard this man play. Now I was sure.

"Damarel," I said softly, "it is you." I turned. I was alone. I walked back to the cabin like a man in a dream. Damarel, for it was he, was sitting with bowed head looking at the violin in his lap. As I entered he raised his head and smiled.

"Do you know me now? Do you understand?" he asked. Sometimes words are poor things. I could only nod.

But he went on: "This violin—is yours. At first I wondered, almost fearfully, why you came. But when you played, I knew. It was to show me my successor, my master. And I am glad it is to be yours, 'Besoid, the greatest violinist of the century.'"

I roused myself to expostulate. I knew that the violin was not mine, even if the prophecy were true. And I, like you all, did not believe in prophecies. But, by all I said, Damarel was unmoved.

"Ah, it is yours, the prophecy is true. You must believe it," he said earnestly. "And do not think that I want the violin so badly. After all, what is greatness? It is not always happiness. Why should I desire it. I



have much more than you have with all your greatness. I have the mountains. They are enough." He stopped and laid his hand on the violin. "On the day you hear of my death, this will be in your keeping. Till then you will permit me to have it? Remember, it is yours."

Nothing I could say would change his conviction that I was the master player. Finally, he would not even argue with me, and when I talked the loudest, only smiled at my impetuosity. In the morning, beyond giving me directions, he took scarcely any notice of me and when I left he barely noticed it. He was watching for the first glint of the sun on the cliff.

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Besoird stopped suddenly and closed the window.

"But what next? Where is he now?" asked Clayborne, voicing the unspoken question that was on all our tongues.

Besoird pointed to the paper. "You just read the notice of his death. Do you think I would have told you, if he were still alive?" We were silent and ashamed. We knew he wouldn't.

"And you let him stay out there in the wilderness. Why didn't you bring him back?" asked Dustin.

"Why? I don't know. I never thought of it. He was too happy where he was." Besoird came over to the fire.

"But the violin?" insisted Clayborne. "The prophecy? 'On the day you hear of his death you—'"

Besoird shook his head. "I don't know. I wonder. Just a short time ago it was that I heard—"

A loud knock jarringly interrupted.

"An express package for Mr. Besoird," announced a porter through the open door.





As Besoird took the long, ungainly package, his face paled. For a moment I thought he was going to faint.

"It can't be," he whispered hoarsely, "it can't be."

Slowly he untied the package while we eagerly crowded around. Fumbling with the wrappings, he at length disclosed a battered violin case. Besoird opened it and looked.

"The prophecy," he said. "It is fulfilled." Wrapped in felt lay the violin in a thousand, an ebony fingerboard and a crushed mass of splinters.

NAT LITTLE, '14.





A Legend of Sentinel

'Neath the pine tree's balmy bough,
Old Pan lay in dreamy sleep;
Chaplet fallen from his brow,
Oak-twined staff within the keep
Of gnarled hand with brown palm deep.
Rested now
Sunbeams on his buskined feet.

Quivering through the woods, the sun
Touched the pine trees' cones with gold;
White clouds, wafted one by one,
Sailed the heaven's azure hold—
Ships by fairy hands controlled.
Valleys dun
Lost themselves in purpling gold.

O'er the mountain's highest mound
Tripped sweet spring in misty light,
Fragrant hair with violets bound,
Eyes like amethystine night,
Lips a-smile and lashes bright.
Loosely wound
Folds cerulean swept the ground.

On her arm a pannier
Filled with flowers of glorious hue;
Where her footsteps, light as air,
Touched the greensward bright with dew,
Sprang a litter-root to view.
Tree buds rare
Started, called to life anew.

Spring paused on the purple height,
Saw the valley's distant plain,
Beating haze and tender light,
Meads soft-hued and washed with rain;
Hummed a gentle, low refrain.
Wonderous sight!
Spring saw there her fair domain.

In his dream-adorned doze
Pan-god heard somebody sing.
Startled, staring, he arose.
What was this unheard of thing
On this rough rock balancing?
Bellicose
Pan-god plunged toward fairy Spring.

Hark! the crack of twigs of pine.
What this massive, shaggy head,
Eyes of fire, staff serpentine?
Spring glanced 'round, then quickly fled
Toward the river's shimmering red.
In a line
Down the slope the great Pan fled.

Alas, for Spring! Her light foot tripped
O'er a stone in larkspur blue.
From her grasp the basket slipped,
Down the slope like a rocket flew,
Up Spring leaped and fled anew.
Faintly lippled,
"Save Hill-god! Thy will I'll do."

God of Hills this very hour
Wandered 'mong his forest trees,
Heard the cry outside his bower,
Brought by Zephyrus, the breeze.
"Amazement, Pan now quickly seize.
By my power
Magic works," the God decrees.

Now, in wake of the basket's fall,
Flowers dropped as the basket rolled;
Sprang they into bushes tall,
Clothed with blooms of white and gold,
Filled the ragged crevice old.
Magic all,
Clusters from some fairy wold.

Great Pan, trembling, gaped alone—
Strange the burst of clusters white—
Shone his eyes like emerald stone—
Then recalled—where was the sprite?
The stream below flowed mistily on.
Sentinel's zone
Quivered with its pine trees slight.

Somewhere—where—above, below?
Laughed a voice from depths of space,
Sweet and soft like winds that blow
When lilies take on springtime grace,
And wind flowers lift a smiling face.
All around
Old Pan looked. Of Spring, no trace.

Looked he in the distance dim,
Toward the purpling canon's deep,
Far to the heaven's rosy rim,
South, where summer's warm winds sleep.
But for him
Only baffling landscapes' sweep.

Spring was gone, Pan knew not where.
Long he searched where woodnymphs play,
Found no trace despite his care.
"Spring? Why she came not this way,"
Every nymph to him would say.
Light as air
On they sped in Pleasure's sway.

Clusters astral still adorn,
When maple buds begin to swell,
Where the hill is crevice torn.
People of the valley tell—
For they love the story well—
How up there
Spring once fled down Sentinel.



Going Down

The last whistle blows its command to "lower men." The timekeeper slams down his checking window, and the miners in working clothes crowd toward the collar of the shaft, impatient to be out of the cold. The cage glides up noiselessly from the yawning mouth of the shaft and vacillating on its safety springs for a moment, settles with a metallic clang upon the station "guards." The station-tender throws back the outer bar, opens the safety lattice of the cage and admits nine of the waiting men upon each deck. The lattices are closed, the bar is thrown back into the clutch, the guards are released from under the cage and the station signal is given the engineer. With a slight bouncing motion the cage commences its descent.



The light fades out rapidly as the speed downward increases, and, as the station lights flit by in rapid succession, the ear-drums pop and a buzzing, sinking sensation is experienced. In the dark interludes between stations you would be unable to say whether you were ascending or descending, but as soon as you shoot past a blinking station light you are brought back to reality. Suddenly the cage seems to be suspended in mid-shaft, the guards scrape slowly along the fir guides, and with an unexpected glare the station lights of the 1200 level break in upon you. With a slow descending motion and some oscillation of the safety springs the cage jars as it encounters the station "dogs," and finally rests. A station tender, wet with the drippings from overhead, releases the men who shuffle off in a long line into the drifts.

—HUBERT.



Fragments From Forty-Seventh Oration of Marcus Tullus Cicero Against the Chronic Sluffer

When, O Sluffer, will you cease to abuse the patience of the long-suffering faculty? How long will this defiance of yours still mock us? When is there to be an end of this bold effrontry, swaggering about the campus as it does now? Does not the president, looking reproachfully at you, does not the summons from the registrar, does not the opinion of your fellow students and of all the faculty—does not the precaution taken of making more stringent absence rules—do not the looks and countenances of the venerable attendance committee here present, have any effect on you? Do you



not feel that your "ents" are detected? Do you not see that your carefully planned excuse is already vitiated and rendered ineffective by the knowledge, which everyone here possesses, that you were down eating ice cream at Elton's? What were you doing last Wednesday, when you should have been at convocation, what the day before when you should have been at gym class? Where is it that you were—who was there that you summoned from the "Dorm" to meet you—what agreement was made by you both to escape the vigilance of the chairman of the scholarship committee, with which you think that any one of us is unacquainted?

Shame on the younger generation and its principles.

—LITTLE.



“Advice”

Did you ever get a letter from the mother at home that read something like this:

“Dear Son: Your young brother is getting so bad that we can’t do anything with him. Won’t you write to him and give him some advice. You will probably have more effect on him than we have. Etc. With love. Write soon.”

You sit down to your writing desk with a stern resolve to write the rules of the “to do’s” and “not to do’s,” to your small brother. You will tell him that this playing hookey is foolish and that he had better stick to his books; suddenly you remember in those old high school days how this same young brother waited around till dark for you to come back from a trip to the river and take him home from town. Did he complain about waiting around that livery barn and threaten to tell pa about your staying out all day? No, never a whimper from him. You can hardly give advice on truancy and be consistent, can you?

Then you start a little lecture on the injury of cigarettes, only to stop short when the thoughts come flying back of the many times the little brother braved the family strap to snatch a handful of father’s Seal of North Carolina for you to choke and sneeze with on your way to town. When you got sick, did he tell mama that you had been smoking. No, your little brother never breathed a word. A man could hardly preach a sermon to him on this.

Anyway, you must give him the dickens for playing pool for chips. That is a little more than even you can stand. But not so far distant, back a few years, you remember suddenly how the little brother often went hungry at noon-time just because you were donating to that fascinating game of pea-ball pool. Did he complain? Never! You throw down your pen in disgust. You can’t reprove that little brother. Let the folks do it themselves.

—ARMITAGE.

My Boarding House

Here’s to my boarding house, where I ruined my stomach. Where the beefsteak was always tough and the pie was always soggy. Where I learned a lot of bad manners, and developed an awful reach. Where I learned, too, that the best man got the most to eat. Where I met a number of undesirable people, and got into the habit of actually using my fork when ladies were present, and telling shady stories when only the men were there. So here’s to my boarding house. God bless it! I wish that I could get away from it, but I’m afraid that I can’t—I owe too much back board.

—GLICK.