

## IN FOG AND MIST.

Morning gray as any sun,  
Now is time of coming sun,  
Fog and mist, across the dawn,  
Have their heavy curtains drawn.  
Dripping branches, bare and brown—  
Shall we smile or shall we frown?

Hear the voices faint and far:  
All unsightly as we are  
Every tree heart holds within  
Faith in nature's discipline.  
So we welcome skies like these,  
Welcome all her mysteries."

Ross trees shrouded in the gloom,  
Do you ever hope to bloom?  
"What of dreary mists outside?  
Happy secrets do we hide,  
All the glory of the rose,  
Do our folded buds inclose."

Robin, in a world forlorn,  
Do you frown away the morn?  
Shake of wing and swelling throat—  
"Nay, I sing my gayest note;  
Dear old world, it needs my lay,  
Under skies so dull and gray."

Shall I then, when clouds arise,  
Meet them with despairing eyes?  
Let my heart forget its faith,  
And my hope go down to death,  
While the world, the clouds among,  
Needs all faith and hope and song?"

—A. E. Woodworth, in Chicago Advance.

## A CLEW BY WIRE

Or, An Interrupted Current.

BY HOWARD M. YOST.

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## CHAPTER VI.—CONTINUED.

The remainder of the forenoon was spent in going through the barns and over the farm.

A small structure, twenty or thirty feet from the house, had been used to do the cooking, baking, churning, washing and ironing in. We could not gain access to the cooking house, as it had been called, the door being locked. There had been no care taken of this place, and I could hardly see through the dust and dirt which obscured the windows, when I attempted to look inside.

"There is nothing to be seen in there, anyhow," I said. But I remembered the pile of cakes and the loaves of bread which had issued from the old Dutch oven built in one side of the cook-house. How I wish for some of the good things now!

After a midday dinner, I harnessed the horse in the buggy. According to my instructions, my agent had provided me with a single rig, and I now proposed to use it to drive Sarah home and then keep on down the road, past Sidington Station, across the river to Twineburgh, in which place Mr. Sonntag, my lawyer, resided.

I had never seen Mr. Sonntag. My former agent had died nearly a year ago, and six months after his death Sonntag had bought the law business from the heirs.

I had been advised of this fact by a circular letter from the present incumbent, giving references as to ability, honesty, etc. Mr. Sonntag had also requested me to allow him to assume management of my small estate. As Mr. Perry, the president of the bank, was down among the names of reference, I was most willing to grant Mr. Sonntag's request, and wrote him to that effect.

On the way to Sarah's house I unburdened myself to the good old soul. I told her of my hopes regarding Florence, and my fears that those hopes would never be realized.

"Ach, yes," answered Sarah, "you will marry her some day. Just see how you've been brought both to the same place togidder. And I know she loves you."

"You are more certain than I am of that," I answered, somewhat gloomily. "I have told you everything about myself, because I have no mother to confide in; and you will no more violate my confidence than a mother would; of that I am certain."

"Ach, yes," answered Sarah, "you will marry her some day. Just see how you've been brought both to the same place togidder. And I know she loves you."

Her love was grateful to me, orphans as I had been for many years, and for the last year without a friend to console or advise me.

"But you was foolish, Nel, to say you not see her until you fint de robbers," Sarah went on—"foolish of you, and hart for her, too. I bet you she hat lots of heartache."

"What else could I do, though, in honor?" I exclaimed.

"Well, you are innocent, and she loves you, and knows, too, dat you didn't rob de bank. So den it would be no dis-honor to drust her love and be happy in id."

Sarah's logic found an echo in my heart. Perhaps it was unjust to Florence's love not to ask her to share my burden. I knew, if I could share any sorrow or trouble of hers, how happy I would be.

We soon reached Sarah's house, and I reined up to allow her to alight. Then I continued on my way.

Twineburgh was about two miles across the valley beyond Sidington. It was a lively little place, of about 2,000 inhabitants. One of the great trunk lines of railroad ran through the town.

The road to Twineburgh crossed the track at Sidington station, near the depot.

As I reined up my horse to a walk and glanced up and down the track before crossing, I saw the station agent standing on the edge of the platform.

I nodded to the fellow and he answered with a grin. Then, as he slowly came toward me, I stopped the horse and waited.

"You took the trunk, didn't you?" he asked.

"Mr. Hunsicker came for it," I replied.

"I saw the trunk was gone when I came back," he said, in his lumbering fashion. "Did Jake take you over to Nelsonville?"

"Yes. I am much obliged to you for directing me to him," I said, shortly.

"I thought mebbe he would."

Having said this, he shifted his weight to the other foot. I patiently waited.

"Nice country around Nelsonville," he finally went on. "Some of the city folks beginning to find it out and go there for the summer. Mr. Morley's been there six months now. Know Mr. Morley?"

"I am slightly acquainted with him," I replied.

"Then there's another feller comes up from the city. Let's see—what's his name, now? He's got a little hut a mile or so from here, and comes up to hunt and fish. Guess he don't shoot very much. I never see him take any game back to town with him. Oh, yes, now I remember. His name's Jackson."

I started in surprise and became a little more interested.

"What? Not Horace Jackson?" I asked.

"Yes, that's his name. Acquainted with him?"

"I used to know Mr. Jackson quite well."

"Seems to be a nice fellow," the agent remarked, reflectively.

"A very pleasant gentleman. Oh, by the way," I went on, "is there a telegraph instrument at the depot?"

"To be sure."

"And I could send a message whenever I want to?"

"Yes; that is, whenever I'm here."

"Well, but supposing I had an important message to send when you are not here?" I asked. "Where could I find you?"

"I live up the track about a mile," he replied.

"This direction?"

"Yes. The house is right by the track, just where the switch begins."

"And what's your name?"

"Aski for Hunter."

It appeared to me that the fellow did not relish my questioning. He seemed to be ill at ease under it.

"Does Jackson go to Mr. Morley's house when he comes up here?" I asked.

"I guess he does, sometimes. He ain't been up lately; not for five or six weeks. At least I haven't seen him."

"Does Mr. Morley stay at Nelsonville all the time?" I asked. "Or does he go to town every day?"

"He goes to the city three days in the week; sometimes more'n that. He takes the morning train here at Sidington, and comes up to Twineburgh on the afternoon train."

I bowed my head and drove on.

The fellow's words gave me food for thought. Horace Jackson a frequent visitor at the Morleys, or at least until recently—why? I knew he had some business relations with Mr. Morley; Jackson himself had told me so. But then why did he not transact his business at Mr. Morley's office in the city? No doubt he did, and therefore visited Nelsonville for another reason. Florence Morley was the attraction. Remembering that she had passed me by without a greeting, my heart grew heavy with doubt.

## CHAPTER VII.

The probability that I had a rival in the field, and one who had a free road while I was handicapped by the suspicion of a crime, filled me with desperation.

Had I only followed my first impulse, and not allowed a whole year to intervene without making an attempt to clear myself! If you want anything of consequence done, do it yourself, was a maxim I had always believed in, and as far as possible followed out. But in this one most important instance, where the circumstances affected my whole life and promised to annul all possibility of future happiness, I had held aloof with a supineness for which I could not now condemn myself strongly enough.

I knew the bank officials had used every effort to recover their property. I knew the shrewdest detectives had been put on the case. Notwithstanding this, nothing had been discovered. How could I, then, hope to succeed? Where could I begin? There was not the least sign of a clew to work on.

I soon drove into Twineburgh, and had no trouble in locating Mr. Sonntag's office.

An undersized old fellow with bristling gray hair was seated at a desk, his back toward the door. He took no notice of me, and, after standing for a few minutes gazing at the back of his head, I made known my presence.

"I wish to speak to Mr. Sonntag," I said.

"Take a chair; be at leisure in a moment," came the answer, in quick, jerky tones. He did not even turn his head, but went on with his work.

I sat down and looked around. It was a typical small-town lawyer's office I was in. There were a few law books in a small, rickety bookcase on one side of the room, a few rough wooden chairs, warranted to cause a backache only to look at them, a few old maps and calendars, most of the latter of former years, hanging on the walls, a wooden spittoon filled with sawdust on the floor, a rusty stove, from which the discolorations of the fires of the last winter had not been removed, standing in one corner, and, lastly, the desk before which was seated my agent and lawyer.

I thought the old fellow, judging from his back, was in complete harmony with his surroundings; but I soon found I had misjudged the man. For when he finally arose, turned toward me and favored me with a searching glance from a pair of the keenest steel-blue eyes I had ever seen, it was very evident Mr. Sonntag was not as rusty as his surroundings.

There was something familiar to me about him. Had I met him before? I could not remember.

Arising, I was about to make myself known, but before I could utter a word he stepped briskly up to me and with a smile extended his hand.

"I am glad to see you," he began

"Of course you are my client, Mr. Nelson Conway?"

"Yes, that is my name," I answered, somewhat surprised. "But, as you have probably never seen me before, although your face does seem familiar, I should like to ask how you knew."

"Nothing remarkable about it at all. You wrote me from Paris, you remember, stating the probable time of your arrival home. And, although I have been here only six months, I have got to know, by sight at least, every one about this place. Therefore I knew you were a stranger, that Mr. Conway was about due, and—well, there you have it. Have you just arrived?"

"I came yesterday noon."

"Indeed. And where are you stopping?"

"Over at the old house, of course. Where else should I have gone?"

"Oh, I supposed you would have put up at the hotel here in Twineburgh until we could get things in a little better shape for you at the homestead. How did you find things?"

"Considering that the house has been vacant so many years, I was very agreeably surprised to note the good state of repair it is in." I replied.

"I have tried to follow out the plans of my predecessor as far as possible. You think you will enjoy your stay in Nelsonville?" he asked, flashing an inquiring glance at me.

"To be sure."

"And I could send a message whenever I want to?"

"Yes; that is, whenever I'm here."

"Well, but supposing I had an important message to send when you are not here?" I asked. "Where could I find you?"

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"It was then about quarter of two. Of course it would have been the part of common sense for me to go away, but I didn't. I took the chances and looked around the house. But I didn't find anything that I wanted bad enough to carry it off. I didn't look very hard. To tell the truth I never came so near to feeling mean about my business as I did that morning.

"It wasn't because I was working on a holiday. In my business we don't pay much attention to holidays, anyway; we work right along just the same, but somehow this Fourth o' July business, string out of the window, and all that kind o' touched me up.

"I went up to the boy's room and found him sleeping sound as a nut. Fourth o' July things spread out on a table. Humph! Three or four packs of firecrackers not opened. One pack loose in a saucer, all ready to begin. Three or four pieces of punk. Two or three pin wheels, and two or three little bits of rockets. Pretty small outfit, take it to altogether, but the boy's heart was in it. Very likely he didn't realize what Fourth o' July meant; I don't suppose he did; but it was a great day, all the same.

"I looked out of the boy's window. This was in the country, or rather in a country town, and off in the distance I could hear guns now and then, and now and then a pistol; sometimes I could see the flash. Men celebrating. Drunk, maybe, round some tavern, but celebrating; celebrating their country, mine too, and I was around robbing people.

"When I went past the string again I gave it a yank; I thought I ought to have that much fun out of it, anyway, and hid behind a currant bush and waited to see him poke his head out, which he did in about a quarter of a minute. But he didn't see anybody there; and I suppose he must have thought he dreamt it. But he didn't—the string was pulled—I pulled it."—N. Y. Sun.

**Exit George.**

The time was approaching midnight. The old gentleman was listening from a coign of vantage at the head of the stairs. He had been there in his stockinged feet for as long as 32 minutes.

The young man was lingering at the front door with the old gent's daughter. As a lingerer he was a success, and he was aided and abetted by the girl. This, also, the old gent knew, as well as several other interesting things. That's why he became tired of listening at the head of the stairs. At last he heard a shuffling of feet. "It's so hard to say 'good-night,' darling," the young man said to the girl, who believed every word he uttered. As they always do before matrimony gets in its baleful work. "Don't say it, George," sang out the old man; "wait about five minutes and say 'good morning.'"

"Oh, I had a key to the outside door, and got in that way. If I'm it is, as you say, very strange, indeed. But resume your seat, Mr. Conway."

Again the thought occurred to me that I had met Mr. Sonntag, or at least seen him, somewhere before.

"Did I ever meet you?" I asked, voicing my thought.

He glanced quickly at me, and then smiled as he said: "Look like some one you know, do I? One often meets people who put them in mind of some one else. Now, regarding this cellar affair. Is there anyone you know who is interested in your property?" he asked, in a brisk, business-like manner.

"No, one," I replied. "I am the last of my race—a lonely man, and one who is sick at heart, I was about to add."

Mr. Sonntag's face became serious, and I thought there was a touch of pity on it.

"Cheer up, Mr. Conway. The tables will turn some day, and you will forget the time of trouble and despondency," the old lawyer said, cheerfully