

HE WAS ONLY A CLERK

By H. M. EGBERT

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I CAN'T stand this any longer, Dick. I'm going to leave you." Edith Kane faced her husband of eight months defiantly. The setting for the tragic outbreak was commonplace; a city flat. In the tiny living room the two clashed in that age-long conflict. "Because I am poor?" inquired Kane quietly. He had long expected the culmination; now that it had come he felt cooler than he had thought would be possible. His wife looked with contempt upon the little figure in the shabby clothes. "Because you are a clerk," she answered. "Because you are content to be a clerk. You have a clerk's soul, and I—I was born for something better than to be a clerk's wife." "You knew my occupation when you married me," said Kane. "I did," she answered. "And I thought I'd make something of you. But you're satisfied to work for Jerrold day after day, on thirty a week, while he piles up his millions. Oh, I'm tired of it all." She sank into a chair, put her face in her hands, and burst into hysterical weeping. Kane stood for a moment watching her. Then he walked to her and raised her head from her hands, flinging it back almost brutally. "How dare you use violence to me!" "Never mind that. I want to ask you a question. Are you leaving me for Jerrold?" "What if I am? Have you any right to ask, you who have made me slave for you, slave for a clerk?" Her breath came and went quickly, she rose to her feet and looked at him with all the disdain she felt. "I insist on knowing," answered Kane. "You insist? Well—yes. For a better man. For your employer, Mr. Jerrold. The man who has thousands where you have pennies." "Thank you," said Kane. He left her and went into his room. Immediately, before the defiant anger had left her, she began hurriedly to pack a suitcase. She cast away contemptuously the few things her husband had been able to buy for her, and went out. Kane, in his room, heard the door of the hall slam behind her.

II. Harvey Jerrold, the millionaire broker, was quite willing to see his underpaid employee in his bachelor apartment on the drive. He knew why Kane had not been to the office for three days. Edith had telephoned him from her hotel the next morning, telling him about the quarrel. He had wanted to go to her, but she had refused to see him till he had his quarrel out with Kane. They had autographed and dined together, the man and his employee's wife, but Edith Kane, despite her worldliness, was prudent and, in a way, honorable. She had held Jerrold at arm's length, and even when he began to talk about her divorce she had refused to let him embrace her. Besides, as every woman knows, if you really mean a man to marry you, you must go about it with discretion. And, though she cared nothing for Jerrold, Edith Kane was resolved to have the spending of his millions. Jerrold had been on pins and needles because Kane did not appear. He had even meditated going to him; therefore, when Kane was announced by the Japanese butler, he felt his heart leap triumphantly. He had squared all accounts with money, and he had no doubt that he could square Kane in the same way. He stood in his room waiting for him with an uneasy but yet confident smile. And Kane wasted no time in coming to the point. "You know what I have come about," he cried, an absurd little figure confronting the six-foot college athlete. "About Mrs. Kane?" inquired Jerrold blandly. "I'll have it from your own lips," cried Kane. "She has left me because she loves you—you or your money. What are you going to do about it?" "I can't catch her and drag her back to you, can I, Mr. Kane?" drawled the other. "Are you going to marry her?" "That depends largely on the decision of the Reno court," said the millionaire. "I guess there won't be any difficulty about that," said Kane. "Your money will get anything. Are you going to marry her when the court has decided?" "I hope so," answered Jerrold. "See here, Kane, I'm—I'm sorry. But in this life the riches and the women go to the strong. You've lost her. But I'll make good to you. I'll give you"—he hesitated—"thirty thousand dollars for your wife. What do you say?" "You scoundrel!" shouted Kane, shaking his fist at the other's face. "You contemptible blackguard!" "It's more than any court would give. Take it or leave it, Kane," said Jerrold quietly. "I—I accept," said Kane suddenly. III. Three years later he saw his wife

again. They met in an elevated train, going north after the day's work was over. He was shocked at the woman's appearance. Jerrold could not have been as kind a companion as she had expected, to judge from the sadness of her expression. There was a haunted look upon her face. They looked up and saw each other across the aisle. He got off at the next station, but, when he reached the platform, she had followed him. "I want to tell you, Dick, that I—I am sorry," she said in a low voice. At the remembered tone he felt the old longing sweep over him; he longed to take her in his arms, but he only bowed and stood aside. "I want to give you my address in case—" she began. "Thank you, but I can find Mr. Jerrold any time I wish," he replied. And she shrank from him, crimson with mortification. She had handed him the pasteboard, and automatically he had extended his hand. The letters burned themselves into his brain like fire. He knew he could never forget that place. All the way home he saw 313 Mortimer street graven against the heavens. So she was tiring of the new love! He wondered whether she had heard—had heard that he, with the price of her shame, was now well established in Wall street. He had put the thirty thousand into a broker's business; with his knowledge acquired in Jerrold's office, he had soon become wealthy. But she could not know that the one purpose for which he lived was nearing accomplishment. Step by step he had dogged Jerrold. He had pursued him remorselessly, had hammered his stocks, had learned the secrets of his private speculations and made good use of them. The month of wild speculation that had just ended had been a hard one for Jerrold. It had left the little clerk a millionaire.

IV. Jerrold sat in his office, utterly broken. Everything had gone up in smoke, and at last he knew the name of the man who had ruined him. He had learned too late. His own place of power had fallen to the clerk. He had lost seven million dollars, and Kane must have made three times that sum. A sense of irony was stronger than his rage. "A gent, sir, wants to see you—" "I'll see nobody." "I think you'll see me, Mr. Jerrold," said Kane, who had followed hard on the heels of the office boy. "It's five years since you saw me before," he added, quietly. Jerrold sprang up with a snarl. But the clerk did not flinch; he seemed transformed, and it was he who possessed the ease, the confidence. "Yes, I have your money, Jerrold," he said. "In this life, Jerrold, the riches and the women go to the strong. You blackguard," he burst out fiercely. "I've brought you your seven millions, your dirty millions. Now take them to your wife and tell her that's her first husband's wedding present to her second." And he flung a check upon the other man's desk. Jerrold stared at it, stared at the man who had beaten him, who was already going. Suddenly he felt himself choking; he realized that the tragedy had eaten into Kane's soul, had branded it indelibly with shame. "Kane!" he muttered huskily. "See here! Didn't you know?" "Know what?" cried Kane. "Why—that she didn't marry me! I haven't seen her since that day. She went West and—thought better of it, Kane. Lord, to think you didn't know! The money—" "D—n the money!" yelled Kane, rushing from the office. And in the heavens, dancing in lurid red on their blue background, he saw the number of the house on Mortimer street.

Relics of Past Ages in Western Ireland
Near Quinta castle, on the Ards peninsula, in western Ireland, in the grounds of Rock cottage stands a massive prehistoric rock, known locally as a "gallaun." Local legend has it that this was an execution stone of the chiefs of Tara, who had their dun, or hill—for it seems to be a combination of both—on the summit of Tara hill. The stone is in view of the hill about a mile away, and the chief, it is said, could see the executions at or on it from this hilltop fort, if he did not want to be present at the stone itself. The Ards peninsula has many antiquaries of various classes and ages, from the dolmen at Mountstewart to priory and cross of Newtownards. There are also Elizabethan-age keeps, often, though erroneously, called De Courcy castles—he died three hundred years or so before they were built. Not far from the execution stone there is a nice little cromlech, or stone circle; at Slanes, a fine souterrain near the graveyard, with others in various parts of the peninsula. Of the many smaller objects of interest may be mentioned flint and other stone implements of prehistoric times.

Rules for Pruning Trees
The bureau of plant industry says that pruning an evergreen tree is not recommended, as pruning is likely to spoil the shape of the plant. In choosing plants for any particular position they should be selected with the thought of the ultimate height, so that they will not need pruning. If they must be pruned, do it any time except in the spring, when the tree is making new growth.

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