

Reading for Women and all the Family



Bringing Up Father

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By McManus



The Real Man

By FRANCIS LYNDE

Illustrations by IRWIN MYERS

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(Continued)

"Thank you," she laughed. "In a minute or so I'll go back to the president's office and collect." Then: "One dinner, lodging and breakfast of us was about all you could stand, wasn't it? I thought maybe it would be the way."

"What made you think so?"

She had seated herself in the chair reserved for inquiring investors. There was a little interval of glove-smoothing silence, and then, like a flash out of a clear sky, she smiled across the desk end at him and said: "Will you forgive me if I ask you a perfectly ridiculous question?"

"Certainly. Other people ask them every day."

"Is—your name really and truly John Smith?"

"Why should you doubt it?"

It was just here that Smith was given to see another one of Miss Corona's many moods—or tenes—and it was a new one to him. She was visibly embarrassed.

"I—I don't want to tell you," she stammered.

"All right; you needn't."

"If you're going to take it that easy, I will tell you," she retorted. "Mr. Williams thought your name was an alias; and I'm not sure that he doesn't still think so."

"The Smiths never have to have



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alias. It's like John Doe or Richard Roe, you know."

"Haven't you any middle name?"

"I have a middle initial. It is M."

He was looking her fairly in the eyes as he said it, and the light in his small eyes was excellent. Thanks to her homelick riding, Miss Corona's new oval face had a touch of healthy outdoor tan; but under the tan there came, for just a flitting instant, a flush of deep color, and at the back of the gray eyes there was something that Smith had never seen there before.

"It's—it's just an initial?" she queried.

"Yes; it's just an initial, and I don't use it ordinarily. I'm not ashamed of the plain 'John.'"

"I don't know why you should be," she commented, half absently, he thought. And then: "How many John Smiths do you suppose there are in the United States?"

"Oh, I don't know; a million or so, I guess."

"I should think you would be rather glad of that," she told him. But when he tried to make her say why he should be glad, she talked pointedly of other things and presently went back to her father's office.

There were fine little beadings of perspiration standing on the fugitive's forehead when she left him.

After the other members of the office force had taken their departure, he still sat at his desk striving to bring himself back with some degree of clearheadedness to the pressing demands of his job. Just as he was about to give it up and go across to the Hophra House for his dinner, William Starbuck drifted in to open the main gate and to come and plant himself in the chair of privilege at Smith's desk end.

"Well, son; you've got the animals stirred up good and plenty at last," he said, when he had found the "makings" and was deftly rolling a cigarette—his one overlapping habit reaching back to the range-riding youth. "Dick Maxwell got wire today from his kiddie's grandpa—and my own respected daddy-in-law—Mr. Hiram Fairbairn; you know him—the lumber king."

"I'm listening," said Smith.

"Dick's wire was an order; instructions from headquarters to keep hands off of your new company and to work strictly in cahoots—"harmony" was the word he used—with Clifford Stanton. How does that fit you?"

The financial secretary's smile was the self-congratulatory face-wrinkling of the quarry foreman who has seen his tackle hitch hold to land the big stone safely at the top of the pit.

"What is Maxwell going to do about it?" he asked.

"Dick is all wool and a yard wide; and what he signs his name to is what he is going to stand by. You

won't lose him, but the wire shows us just about where we're aiming to put our leg into the gopher hole and break it!"

"Mr. Fairbairn and his colleagues are just a few minutes too late, Starbuck. We've got our footing—inside of the corral."

The ex-cowpuncher, who was now well up on the middle rounds of fortune's ladder, shook his head doubtfully.

"Don't you make any brash breaks, John. Mr. Hiram Fairbairn and his crowd can swing twenty millions to your one little old dollar and a half, and they're not going to leave any of the pebbles unturned when it comes to saving their investment in the Escalante. That's all; I just thought I'd drop in and tell you."

Smith went to his rooms in the hotel a few minutes later to change for dinner. He found the linen drawer in his dressing-case overflowing. Opening another, he methodically emptied the empty drawer with a newspaper, and a single headline on the upturned page sprang at him like a lightning bolt among the clouds. He bent lower and read the underlining paragraph with a dull rage mounting to his eyes and serving for the moment to make the gray printed lines turn red.

Lawrenceville, May 19.—The grand jury has found a true bill against Montague Smith, the ascending cashier of the Lawrenceville Bank and Trust, charged with embezzling the bank's funds. The crime would have been merely a breach of trust and not actionable but for the fact that Smith, by owning stock in the bankrupt Westfall enterprises lately taken over by the Richlander company, had so made himself amenable to the law. Smith disappeared on the night of the 14th and is still at large. He is also wanted on another criminal count. It will be remembered that he brutally assaulted President Dunham on the night of his disappearance. The reward of \$1,000 for his apprehension and arrest has been increased to \$2,000 by the bank directors.

CHAPTER XI. The Narrow World.

At the fresh newspaper reminder that his sudden bound upward from the laboring ranks to the executive headship of the irrigation project had merely made him a more conspicuous target for the man-hunters, Smith scented himself of sleep and redoubled his efforts to land a company on a sound and permanent footing. In the nature of things he felt that his own shift must necessarily be made in the night, and a dramatic coup in Timanyoni High Line had advertised him thoroughly. He was rapidly coming to be the cherished man of Brewster, and he cherished his illusions about lost identities, or the ability to lose them in the land where time and space have been wired and railroaded pretty well out of existence.

It was needless that he should work while the day was his in which to work; and he did work. Williams was still much to be done. Williams was having a threat of labor troubles at the dam, and Stillings had unearthed another possible flaw in the land titles dating back to the promotion of a certain railroad which had never gotten far beyond the paper stage and the acquiring of some of its rights of way.

Smith flung himself masterfully at the new difficulties as they arose, and earned his meed of praise from the men for whom he overcame them. But under the surface current of the hurrying business tide a bitter undertow was beginning to set in. He took his first decided backward step on the night when he went into a hardware store and brought a pistol. The free, fair-fighting spirit which had sent him bandaged against the three claim-jumpers was gone and in its place there was a full determination, undefined as yet, but keying itself to the barbaric pitch.

It had been a day of nagging distractions. A rumor had been sent afoot—by Station, as Smith made no doubt—hinting that the new dam would be unsafe when it should be completed; that its breaking, with the reservoir behind it, would carry death and destruction to the lowlands and even to the city. Timid stockholders, seeing colossal damages in the bare possibility, had taken their alarm. Smith had spent the greater part of the day in trying to calm their fears. For this cause, and some others, he was on the ragged edge when Baldwin dropped in on his way home from the dam and protested.

"Look here, John; you're overdoing this thing, world without end! You break it off short, rightnow, and go home with me and get your dinner and a good night's rest. Get your coat and hat and come along, or I'll rope you down and hog-tie you."

For once in a way, Smith found that there was no fish left in him, and he yielded, telling himself that another acceptance of the Baldwin hospitality, more or less, could make no difference. But no sooner was the colonel's gray roadster headed for the bridge across the Timanyoni than the exhilarating reaction set in. In a twinkling the business cares, and the deeper worries as well, fled away, and in their place heart-hunger was loosed.

Alkali Makes Soap Bad For Washing Hair

Most soaps and prepared shampoos contain too much alkali, which is very injurious, as it dries the scalp and makes the hair brittle.

The best thing to use it just plain mulsified cocoanut oil, for this is pure and entirely greaseless. It's very cheap, and beats the most expensive soaps or anything else all to pieces. You can get this at any drug store, and a few ounces will last the whole family for months.

Simply moisten the hair with water and rub it in, about a teaspoonful is all that is required. It makes an abundance of rich, creamy lather, cleanses thoroughly, and rinses out easily. The hair dries quickly and evenly, and is soft, fresh looking, bright, fluffy and easy to handle. Besides, it loosens and takes out every particle of dust, dirt and dandruff.

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Chas. H. Mauk
PRIVATE AMBULANCE PHONES

"The Insider"
By Virginia Torhune Van de Water

CHAPTER LII

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A strange numbness came over me when Brewster Norton ceased speaking. I dropped my hands from my eyes, but I could not look at him. He walked away from him and stood, with my back to him, gazing out into the West. The sun, casting horizontal rays across the fields and woods, made crimson spots before my eyes. But suddenly my thoughts became clear.

I remembered what this man had done for me, what he had been to me. I recalled his kindness, his unflinching gentleness. I remembered how desolate I had been when I came into his employ. I remembered the dangers that had been about me—a young, orphaned and homeless girl in a great city like New York.

I had had nobody to whom to turn when my father died, nobody to love. Then this man had opened the doors of his home to me, as he might have opened them to his own young sister. How nervous I had been when I took this, my first position! How I had wondered if my little charge would like her new government!

Grace! The child's sweet face rose before my blurred vision and I seemed to hear her light treble calling my name. What would happen if I turned from her father's plea? Would I have to leave Grace? Would I have to go back into that world from which this home had been such a safe refuge? Surely, if I rejected this man's offer I could not in justice to him or to my own self-respect stay in his house.

He came toward me and took my hands.

"I do not love you," I told him abruptly.

"I like you very, very much," I bly. "Don't for a moment fancy, dear, that I am such a fatuous fool as to think that you do—yet. But, Elizabeth—tell me—you don't dislike me, do you? I have fancied that you regarded me as a rather good friend. Am I wrong?"

"I like you very, very much," I replied in a low voice. "But—"

"And there is nobody else you like better?" he asked, still gently.

"No!" I exclaimed. "Indeed, Mr. Norton, there is nobody."

I stopped and sprang away from him. There were footsteps on the stairs leading to the roof, and merry voices were exchanging jesting remarks.

Tom Appears

"It's Tom," my companion muttered, "and Parker's with him. Stay right where you are."

You were saying in an ordinary conversational tone as the two young people appeared in the narrow opening of the scuttle door, that the Eastern room is away off there," pointing with a steady forefinger into the distance. "Ah, young gentlemen, so you have come up to charge this stunning view with us, have you? Miss Dart, you remember Mr. Parker, of course?"

"Yes, indeed," I said, turning to greet the tall, straight figure that had come forward. "But I have

been facing the sun until there are spots before my eyes so that your face is blurred."

I laughed nervously and held out my hand. As Hugh Parker grasped it, I looked up into his face. The spots faded from my vision and I found myself meeting a pair of steady eyes, and as I gazed I felt a sudden calm come over me.

"I am glad to see you again, Mr. Parker," I said quietly.

"And I am glad to see you," he rejoined.

The words were nothing in themselves, but for some subtle reason they warmed my heart. I was sure that the speaker meant them. I recollected that the first time I had ever met him I had been conscious of his innate sincerity.

We four stayed on the roof a few minutes longer; then, with the excuse that it was time Grace had returned from superintending the milking, I slipped away downstairs alone.

I did not indulge the weak desire to hide in my own room, but went right on down to the first floor, called Grace, and sat with her while she ate her bread and milk, chattering all the while about the pretty Jersey cows she had just seen.

Grace is affectionate

I was summoned to dinner by the time the little girl was in bed, and had had her talk with her father. I waited until I heard him leave the nursery and go downstairs, before I went in and gave her her good-night kiss. She flung her arms about

my neck and held me closer than usual, kissing me on the cheek again and again.

"Oh, my dear Miss Dart," she said, "I do love you! I am glad I have you with me all the time. You won't ever go away—will you?"

"What subtle telepathy or intuition had moved the little creature to say just these words on this, of all nights?"

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My employer, in spite of his evident weariness, led the conversation and I was spared the necessity of speaking for some minutes after I had taken my seat. By the time that I must talk, my cheeks were cool and my pulses were not racing as madly as when I first took my place at the table.

It was when we were all sitting on the veranda in the fragrant dusk

that Brewster Norton made a suggestion that set my heart to beating again.

"I have a telegram I must send to the city," he announced. "I could telephone it over, but I feel as if I wanted a little run in the car this heavenly night. Miss Dart—won't you go along with me for company's sake? I am going to take the runabout and drive myself."

(To Be Continued)

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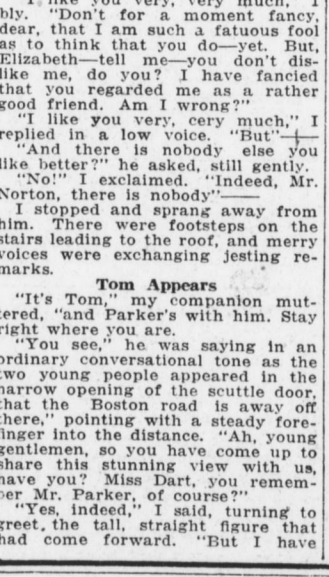
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