

THE YOUNG MAN FROM WYOMING AT EAGLES MERE.

A SULLIVAN COUNTY NOVELETTE.
BY THOMAS J. INGHAM.

"I ascertained the number of acres in the farm and found out that his price was ten thousand dollars. I knew enough about the value of real estate to be sure he was offering a bargain which someone would pick up in a short time. United States certificates were marketable at ten per cent. discount, and four hundred dollars interest was due on mine, so I knew I could raise the ten thousand dollars in cash. Before I left him, therefore, I closed the bargain, and within a day or two the conveyance was made and the money paid. The English farmer left with his family for the lake country, as well pleased with the sale as I was.

"As soon as possible I procured a tenant for my farm; but I found it would not rent for more than four hundred dollars a year over and above the taxes. The actual income was less than the interest I should have received on my certificates; nevertheless, I was satisfied with my investment, for I did not believe it would 'take a hundred years moor' for the city to reach it. The census of that year showed a population of a trifle less than thirty thousand.

"I had left from the sale of my certificates, including the interest, two hundred dollars, and I had two hundred more saved from my salary, which I put in a lot on the Bloomingdale Road.

"I had at that time been in New York nearly four years. After my first year Mr. Golding increased my salary to the wages of an ordinary salesman, and placed me at the counter where the most popular varieties of dress goods were sold. I was kept in that department as long as I remained in his establishment. After my salary was raised I added more comforts to my room, but I only increased my expenses to the extent that the laws of health required. I always took my dinner at a good restaurant, but my breakfast and supper I got myself in my own room, I found this not only more economical, but really better for me, because I selected my own food in the market and had my choice of the freshest and best fruits and vegetables the market afforded. My early hours made marketing a pastime rather than a task, and I had a pleasant acquaintance with a great many market people from the country. I always ate enough of such food as I liked, but never to repletion.

"My life was far from being sedentary. I was on my feet continually in the store. When out of the store I was taking my long walks or in the market, until it was time to go to my room. I had an excellent appetite and a perfect digestion, and when the hour came for sleep I slept soundly until morning. My room was always well aired and kept scrupulously clean.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE.

"I think I have already mentioned that I did not frequent places of amusement, or go into society, although I had abundant opportunities to do so. I should have grown reserved and misanthropic, I think, if my position as salesman had not brought me into continual business intercourse with a great number of ladies. It was purely business intercourse, for no nonsense was allowable in that place, but it seemed to make me feel at home in ladies' society. On the Sabbath I was a regular attendant at church, and, as I was not connected with any particular church, I visited all of them and heard all shades of doctrine preached by the most able ministers. If I lost something of the intense faith in some particular doctrine, which comes from adherence to a single church, I thought I gained something in enlarged views of the Holy Scriptures, and a wide toleration for the many sincere Christians who adhere to conflicting creeds.

"I had written letters to 'Cretia occasionally and she had replied. As she had her household cares always upon her, and did not always have pens, paper and ink handy, she was usually dilatory in writing to me, so our letters were not frequent. I learned, however, from her that there had been almost continual excitement about the land titles, and enough talk about more fighting to make it distressing to her. They were not molested, however, in their possession, and were making money from the farm. They had no children.

"There was no material change in my course of life or pursuits during the four years following. My farm brought me four hundred dollars a year, and I saved three hundred from my salary. At the end of each year, therefore, I put seven hundred dollars in some choice suburban lot. I declined to sell any of my property.

"During the years I had lived in the city the resolution I had formed before I left the valley to have a long life, gain wealth, and have my final triumph with my feet upon the graves of my enemies, had never weakened. From the foundation I had laid, and was still laying, I had no reason to doubt that time would bring me wealth; but how about living? My life was passing like other peoples' lives. True, my naturally strong constitution had been preserved by labor and care, but every year was producing the change called 'age,' and on what could I found hopes of more than ordinary long life? I felt that I must do more than to follow the ordinary rules for preserving health. I said, 'If I tread the same old beaten path, it will lead to the same old open grave.'

"I had picked up at a sale of old books a work of Roger Bacon, from which I learned that alchemists had for centuries sought the 'elixir of life,' and Bacon himself had believed it possible—telling as a truth the story of an old man in Sicily who drank a solution of gold and was made young again. I rated the theories of an 'elixir of life,' and an 'irresistible solvent' at their true value. I perceived they were not truth and did not even contain the germs of truth; that they were rather to be regarded as the fruits of searches for a great truth which had missed the mark. I said, 'It does not follow that because very learned men have failed to find a single elixir which can turn old age into youth, that there is no mode of

CALEB CONOVER RAILROADER.

A STORY OF LOVE, POLITICS, INTRIGUE, OF A RICH & POWERFUL BOSS AND AN INTREPID YOUNG REFORMER.
BY ALBERT PAYSON TERNHUNE.
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"Your son," he said, "is in the West Thirtieth Street police station on a charge of murder."

Conover looked at him without a start, without visible emotion. For a full half minute he made no reply, no comment. Nor did his light, keen eyes flicker or turn aside.

Then—and Wendell feared from his words that the tidings had turned Caleb's brain—the Railroader muttered, half to himself:

"And I only am escaped alone to tell thee."

CHAPTER XXII.

Wendell Gets His Instructions.

"DON'T quite understand," ventured Wendell, the puzzled lawyer.

"Neither do I," said Caleb. "Tell me your story as brief as you can."

"Your son reached town a little after six o'clock this evening," answered Wendell. "It seems he went directly to a restaurant in the theatre district of Broadway, a place frequented by men of a certain class and by the women they take there. It was early, but on account of the election night fun to come later many people were already dining. Gerald afterward told me he went there in the hope of catching a glimpse of his former wife. He saw her there. With her was a man she had known before she met your son, a bookmaker named Stange, from whom Gerald—or Gerald's money—had originally won her, and for whom he always, it appears, retained some jealousy. Gerald walked straight up to the table where they sat, drew a revolver and fired four times point-blank in Stange's face. Any one of the shots by itself would have been fatal. Then he tossed the revolver to a waiter and spent the time until the police arrived in trying to console this Montmorency woman and to quiet her hysterics. They took him to the Tenderloin station and he got the police to telephone for me. I found him in a state of semi-collapse. A police surgeon was working over him. Heart failure brought on by excitement. His heart was already in a depressed, weakened state, the surgeon said, from an overdose of morphine. The poor boy apparently was in the habit of taking it, for they found a case with a hypodermic syringe and tablets in his pocket. And one of his arms—"

"So that was the 'third thing' beside booze and cigarettes?"

It was Caleb's first interruption. During the recital of his son's crime he had stood motionless, expressionless. Not until this trivial detail was reached had he spoken. And even now his voice was as emotionless as was his face. The inscrutable Spartan quiet that had so often left his business and political opponents in the dark was now upon him. Wendell saw and wondered. Mistaking the other's mental attitude for the first daze of horror, he resumed:

"He came around in a few minutes. I did what I could for him. Then I tried to reach you by long-distance telephone. But the wires were down all through this State. I had no better fortune in telegraphing. So I caught the eight-ten train and came straight here. I thought you ought to be told at once, so that—"

"Quite so. Thank you. It was very white. I'm sorry I was so brisk with you while ago."

The lawyer stared. Conover was talking as though a mere financial matter were involved. Still supposing his client suffering from shock that dulled his sensibilities, Wendell continued:

"Morphine and jealousy combining to cause temporary insanity. That must be our line of defence. You agree with me of course?"

"Sut yourself. I'll stand by whatever you suggest."

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The lawyer drew out his watch. "Twelve forty-five," he said. "The New York express passed through Granite at one twenty. We'll have plenty of time to catch it. If you will get ready at once, we'll start. We can discuss details during the trip."

"We?" echoed Caleb. "What do you mean? I'm not going to New York with you."

"Mr. Conover!" exclaimed Wendell, shaking his inert host by the shoulder to rouse him from his apparent stupor, "you don't realize! Gerald is in a cell on a murder charge. To-morrow he will be sent to the Tombs—our city prison—to remain until his case comes up. Then he will be tried for his life and—"

"I know all about the course of such things. You don't need to tell me."

"But this is a life-and-death matter!"

"Well, if I can keep cool over it, I presume you can, can't you? It's very kind of you to explain all this to me, but it ain't necessary. I understand everything you've told me, and I understand a lot you've overlooked. For instance, the pictures that'll be in all to-morrow's evening papers of my boy on his way to the Tombs, handcuffed to a plain-clothes man, and pictures of that chorus woman of his in all sorts of poses, and pictures of the 'stricken father'—that's me—and Letty figuring as the 'aged mother, heart-broke at her son's crime.' And my daughter and her—the Prince d'Antri. And my house and a diagram of the restaurant where the shooting was done. And there'll be interviews with the Montmorency thing and accounts of her being brave and visiting Jerry in the Tombs. And a maynoo of what he'll have for Thanksgiving dinner in his cell. And—"

"I'll do what I can to prevent publicity. I—"

"You'll do nothing of the sort. What happens in public the public has a right to read about. If Jerry's dragged us into the limelight, can we kick if the papers let folks see us there?"

"But surely—"

"That's the easiest part of it. I've got to face my wife with this story. Not to-night, but to-morrow anyhow. Sweet job, eh? A white man don't enjoy squashing the life out of even a guinea-pig in cold blood, let alone a boy's mother. And reporters'll begin coming here by sunrise for interviews, and folks'll be staring at us in the street and offering their measly sympathy and then running off to tell the neighbors how we took it. And every paper we pick up will be full of the 'latest developments' and all that. And those of us who know Jerry will get into the pleasing habit of remembering what a cute, friendly kid he used to be when he was little, and the great things we used to dream he'd do when he grew up, and how we hustled so's he'd have as good a chance in life as any young feller on earth. And then we'll remember he's waiting in jail to be tried for murdering a chorus slattern's lover, and all the black, filthy shame he's put on decent folks that was fools enough to love him, and the way he's fulfilled them silly hopes of ours. Oh, yes, Wendell, I guess I realize, all right, all right. I don't need no 'wakening sense.' But maybe I've made it clear to you now why it is I don't go cavorting off by the next train to console and cheer up the boy who's brought this on us. I don't just hanker—"

"Don't take that tone, I beg, sir!" pleaded the lawyer, deeply pained by what underlay the father's half-scoffing, ironical tirade. "He may live it down. He is only twenty-four. The jury will surely be lenient. After all, there's the 'unwritten law' and—"

"And of all the slimy rot ever thought up by a parietic brain, that same 'unwritten law' is about the rankest specimen," snarled Caleb. "By the time a man's learned to live

up to an the written laws, I guess he won't have a hell of a lot of leisure left to go moseying around among the unwritten ones. Whenever a coward takes a pot-shot at some one within half a mile of a petticoat, up goes the 'unwritten law' scream. Use it if you like in the trial, but for God's sake cut out such hypocritical bosh when you're talking to me. 'Unwritten law!' Why don't the Legislature take a day off and write it?"

"Then you won't come with me to town?" asked the lawyer, with another covert glance at his watch.

"Come with you and tell Jerry how sorry I am for him, and how I sympathize with him for killing his mother—for that's what it'll come to—and for wrecking a name I've spent all my life building up for him, and for making me the shame of all my friends? No, Wendell, I guess I'll have to deprive him of that treat. I'll think up later what's best to do about him. In the meantime get him acquitted."

"Acquitted? That is not so easy. But—"

"Not so easy? Why ain't it?"

"Didn't I tell you to draw on me for all you wanted?"

Didn't I tell you to draw on me for all you wanted? I've got somewhere between forty and fifty millions all told. The jury don't live this side of the own-your-own-cloud suburbs of heaven that hasn't at least one man on it that \$100,000 will buy. If not that, then \$1,000,000. I'll leave the details to you. Buy enough jurors to 'hang' every verdict till they get tired of trying Jerry and turn him loose to save the State further expense. If a murderer ain't convicted on his first trial, it's a cinch he's never going to be on his second or third. Now, it's up to you to buy that drawn verdict for the first trial, and then for the others till they acquit him or parole him in your custody. It's been done before, and it'll be done again. This ain't a 'life-and-death matter,' as you called it. It's a question of dollars and cents. And as long as I've got enough of those same dollars and cents, no boy of mine's going to the death-chair or to life imprisonment either. You'll have to hustle for that train. If you miss it, come back and I'll put you up for the night."

Tense excitement, as was lately his way, had made the formerly taciturn Railroader voluble. He now, as frequently since the night of his speech at the reception, noted this, himself, with a vague surprise.

"If Jerry wants any ready money, just now—" he began, as he escorted the lawyer to the door.

"He seems to have plenty for any immediate needs," returned Wendell. "I saw the contents of his pockets that the police had taken charge of. Besides the morphine case and a few cards and a packet of letters in a sealed wrapper, there were large-denomination bills to the amount of—"

"Packet of letters—sealed?" croaked Conover, catching the other's arm in a grasp that bit to the point of agony. "Letters?" he repeated, his throat dry and contracted.

"Oh, I meant to speak to you about them. Gerald asked me to bring them along. He said he got them for you from a man in Ballston to-day, and was to have sent them to you by registered mail. But in the hurry of catching the New York train and the excitement over the prospects of seeing—"

"Where are they? Did you bring them?"

"I couldn't," answered Wendell, marveling at the lightning change in his client's voice and face. "The police, of course, took charge of them. They will have to be examined by the district attorney's office before—"

"You must hurry or you'll miss your train. Good night."

Conover slammed the door on his astonished guest and walked back into the library.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Discontent in the Ranks.

IN the middle of the oom where he had so vainly sought to inculcate into his family the "pleasant home hour" habit, the Railroader now stood alone, silent, without emotion, his shrewd face an empty, expressionless mask of gray, his eyes alone burning like live coals, showing that the brain within in no way shared the outer shell's inertia.

"I've got to work this out later, when I've more time," he muttered.

And with the resolve came the impulse so common to him when troubled or excited.

"Gaines!" he called to the butler, who, late though the hour was, had not received permission on this great night to retire. "Gaines! order Dunderberg saddled and brought around in fifteen minutes, and have Giles ride with me to-night."

Caleb went up to his dressing-room and hastily changed into his riding clothes.

As he strapped on the second of his spurs a confused babel of sound arose just beyond his dressing-room. This apartment served as a sort of ante-chamber to the study. The noise, therefore, must have come, he knew, from the bevy of men he had left there. This patent fact dawned on Conover as a surprise. He had forgotten his followers' existence, forgotten the undecided election, the impending Grafton returns on which its result would hang. He had even, since Wendell's departure, forgotten Jerry's plight and his own rage and mortification thereat. All life—all the future—now concentrated for him, about the Denzlow packet, whose contents must by this time, or by morning at latest, be known to the authorities. This last and greatest blow had filled all his emotions, driving out lesser thoughts, fears, hopes and griefs, as a cyclone might rip to thin air the dawn mists over a lake.

Now, at the clamor in the study, he pulled himself together. The iron will still held. He strode to the connecting door and opened it. The tumult had died down, and Staats alone was now speaking. So intent were the speaker and his hearers that none noted the Boss's advent from so unexpected a quarter. On the threshold stood Caleb, surveying the scene with quiet contempt.

"And that's how it is!" Staats was declaiming. "We're licked. Licked! Pretty sort of news for Democrats this is!" picking up a newly-broken length of ticker tape around which the other men had been clustering. "City of Grafton, complete: Conover 5,100, Standish 12,351." Is it a wonder you all went nutty when you got it? In Grafton, too, stronghold of Democracy. This means the State for Standish by an easy 4,000, maybe more. And who's to blame? Are you? Am I? Not us. We've had—the whole party's had—our hands tied behind us. And we were sent in to fight like that. Could we use the good old moves? Not us! It must be kid-glove, silk-sock, amachoor politics, meeting Standish on his own ground. No wonder he licked us! A Prohibitionist could have licked men that were hampered like we were. And who was it tied our hands? Who got the party beat and the Machine smashed? Who did it? Caleb Conover!"

He paused panting and seating with wrath. Then, encouraged by a murmur of assent that ran around the ring of listeners, he bellowed:

"We ain't in politics for our health, are we? It's our bread and butter. That bread and butter's been snatched away from us. Who by? Caleb Conover! Are you going to be led by the nose any longer by a man who betrays you like that? For my part I'm tired of wearing his collar."

A growl of approbation greeted his query. His bellow changed to a lower tone of persuasion.

"I ain't saying," he resumed, "but what Conover's done work for the Machine. In his day he was a great man, but his day's past. He's breaking up. Don't this campaign prove he is? Makes us throw our chances out of the window for Standish to pick up. And when we're waiting news from the deciding city he plays a phonograph, and then wanders off and most likely forgets we're here. There's another thing: How did Richard Croker and Charlie Murphy and Matt Quay and N. Bonaparte and all the rest of the big bosses hold their power? By keeping their mouths shut. When Croker once began to talk, what happened? Down tumbled all his power. Same with Quay. Same with N'poleon. Same with all of 'em. Talking was the first sign of losing hold. Look at Conover's case. We can all remember when words was as hard to get out of him as dollars. How about him now? Talks to anyone. I tell you he's breaking up. Unless we want the Machine to break up for good and all, too, we got to get a new Leader."

"If the new Leader's you, Adolphe Staats," cut in a rasping snarl, like a dog's, from the group of politicians, as Billy Shelvin shouldered his way forward and thrust his unshaven face close to the district leader's bristling gray mustache, "if you're the new Leader you're rostin' for, let me put you wise to somethin': You'll go to the primaries straight from the hospital, an' with your shyster mug in a sling. Fer, if I hear another peep out of you, roastin' the Boss, I'll knock you from under your hat, and push your ugly face in till your back teeth bend. You take the Boss's job? Chee! It's to ha-ha! Go chase yourself, fore I chase you so far you'll d'scover a new street. You'd back-track Mister Conover, would you'se? Why, if you go 'round Granite spreadin' ideas of that kind in your own pin-head brain, I'll sure be 'capped to do all sorts of things to you. An' when I'm finished with you the Staats family'll be able to indulge in that al-loorin' pastime called 'Put Papa Together!' You fer Leader, eh? Say! I'm flatterin' you a whole heap when I call you—"

"Let him alone, Billy," intervened Bourke, as the startled Staats backed toward the wall, ever followed by that belligerent, blue-jawed little face so close to his own—"let him alone. He's talking straight. I for one—"

(To Be Continued.)

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