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Churchill Hardware Co.

The Iron Mongers

"HER FLING"

By Elenore Meherin
Author of "Chickie," "Sandy" and
Other Series of Nationwide
Success.
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CHAPTER 77

Within The Law

"What do you mean, father?"

"Yes, his!" He pressed his

palms together. Suddenly he

whipped out a handkerchief and

wiped his face. "The money is

his, Gail."

"Because you think you owe it

to him, father?"

"Because it belongs to him."

His teeth clamped over the words

and he repeated with low quiet

thought to himself: "I am

speaking literally, Gail. It is

his own money I have sent

him."

"What are you saying, father?"

How does this money belong to

Dr. Benders?"

"It does. The Fortunatus fields

were partly his. I took them."

"You, father!" I sprang to my

feet, gripped his hands. "Not

you, father?"

"I met my eyes. Perpiration

stood out above his eyebrows and

his lips. The blood chilled and

then rose in a suffocating wave

through me. I dropped his hands,

but he reached out and touched

me.

"Oh, father! Not you?"

"I loaned the money when no

bank would. They signed the

agreement and couldn't keep it."

"Doesn't belong to Dr. Benders?"

"Gail—you will do this." He

rubbed his hands to his neck.

"He saved my life. Could I fore-

see this? Could I know that you

thought it was Lacey. I asked

you then."

"Oh, what difference does this

make, father?"

I turned to go, trembling in a

half-fainting recoil. My father

seemed to grow dim before me.

"You will not speak to me,

Gail?"

"What is the use, father?"

"You will not ask him to take

it?"

"And become an accomplice to

the steal! Why should I ask

Grant Benders to accept as a

gift what is his as a right?"

"You don't understand, Gail.

The terms were made and signed.

I loaned the money at a time

when no bank had yet been found.

The land might have been worth-

less."

"You knew there was oil

there!"

"No one knew that when I

took the risk."

"But are you saying, father?"

In one hour you sit up and say

\$25,000 belongs to Dr. Benders,

and in the next you say it is

mine? What do you mean?

"Either the Lacey land is

absolutely yours or it isn't."

"It is mine!"

"Then why are you troubled?"

"Why do you sit up and say it is

mine? Why do you pace the floor

and speak savagely to mother? Why

do you wish me to beguile this

man into accepting this princely

sum?"

"I don't want to profit on him,

Gail. He haunts me. I dream

of him sitting at my bed, drag-

ging me back from death. It is

horrible. I can't stand it. You

could do this for me."

"If Dr. Benders knew these

things, father, would he accept

this money?"

He sat upright with a quiver.

"Are you going to tell him,

Gail?"

"Would he be your partner

against Clem Lacey if he knew

it?"

He wouldn't answer.

"And you think, father, that I

will betray him? You think I

would betray him into such a

fraud? No, I will not!"

"Where are you going, Gail?"

"I don't know."

"You are not leaving the

house?"

"Why do you ask that?"

"Wait—wait! The words cost

him torture—were but dry gasps.

"Come back a moment."

"I can't, father. You know

what I think."

"I want to do something for

him. I want you to be happy."

"Oh, father!"

"I want to see you settled. If

you won't ask him to take the

money I will give it to you."

"No!"

"Return the land."

"Is that your opinion?"

"Isn't it yours, father? Why

are you beside yourself about it

if you think it belongs to you?

Why did you tell me the money

belongs to Dr. Benders? Because

it does! And you are honest

enough to know it."

"Father," unconsciously I be-

gan to plead, coming close to

him, putting my hands on his

arms. "You don't want that

money, do you? You will never

have a moment's peace if you

keep it. Why is it only brought

you agony—you are worn to a

skeleton brooding over it?"

"It is mine, Gail. I am not

brooding over it. I told you that.

I merely want to make return to

you and to this doctor."

"Suppose I were to tell him

this, father? Suppose he were to

learn of it, could you ever face

him?"

Dull red crept over his face.

He was about to open the door—

let me go.

I stepped before him.

"Would you want him to know

you are the one that has robbed

him of opportunity?"

"He is not going to be robbed."

"You dare not give him this

money? Don't try it again,

father."

"Are you threatening me,

Gail?"

"I am begging you. Why

can't you do this, father? Clem

Lacey doesn't even know who

owns this corporation. No one

ever needs to know."

"Father—you wished you had

listened before. Didn't you say

this? You don't need this

money, do you?"

"That has nothing to do with

it."

"But it has everything to do

with the people who ought to be

getting it. It means life to them.

It is worse than robbery to keep

it. You can easily give it back

to you."

"It is mine and I will keep

it!"

Swiftly he opened the door,

reeled unsteadily against the

wall, flung himself into his

study, turned the lock.

Around the County

LOOKING GLASS ITEMS

Mr. Millard who has been visit-

ing at The Dalles for some time,

has returned home. He was ac-

companied home by his daughter,

who has been teaching school at

that place.

Mrs. Del Lindgren, who has

been visiting with her sister, Mrs.

Forrest Holmes, is home again.

After visiting in Roseburg a week

she will go to Portland where

she intends to make her home.

Ray Lehman and Walden

Thompson, who have been visiting

friends in Portland, are expected

home Wednesday.

John Montgomery and Jacob

Cline have gone to Hoazlin to

work for the summer. They are

cutting trails into the mountains.

Mr. and Mrs. Arthur and

family from Albany, are visiting

at the home of Mr. and Mrs. R.

A. Hutchins.

Oscar Rodley left Monday for

Diamond Lake. He will be work-

ing there all summer.

Miss Cecil Hutchins is visiting

at the home of her parents, Mr.

and Mrs. Hutchins.

Miss Nelson Andrews' sister and

family have been spending the

past week visiting with the An-

drewe family.

The high school surprised Miss

Berne Hutchins one day last week

and presented her a gift in ac-

knowledgment for the musical help

she has given the school this last

term.

A number from the valley

motored to Bandon last Sunday

to spend the day. Those motoring

down were: Iva Farnsworth,

Frene Rodley, Berne Hutchins,

Oscar Rodley, Ruth Rodley,

Arnold Rodley, Loree Torburn,

Kenneth Hutchins and Bert Mat-

thews.

Rev Buell and Tom Strickland

left Wednesday evening for Port-

land with a load of lambs.

Mrs. A. H. Marsh and her three

small children are spending sev-

eral weeks in Portland visit-

ing with her mother, Mrs. Smith.

The commencement exercises

this year maintained the high

standard of excellence reached

last year when Gov. Pierce was

the commencement speaker. This

year we had a well drilled glee

club of 22 voices. All were high

school pupils. They sang with

fine precision and feeling such

numbers as "America," "Praise

Ye the Father," "America, We

Love Thee," and "Star Spangled

Banner." Fern Hutchins gave a

beautiful selection on the piano

and otherwise assisted. Emmet

Cronk delivered the salutatory

and Hazel Strickland the valedictory.

Mrs. T. S. Thompson sang "The

Holy City." Prof. Louis Wood of

the University of Oregon, gave an

unusually appealing address on

poor citizenship. A. B. Mickens,

chairman, presented the diplomas

to the following graduates: