

**CURTIS' CALL** By HENRY WINTHROP

Copyright, 1904, by T. C. McEwen . . . .

The institution was too new to Scarcrest to be treated with aught save reverence and awe, but there was more than one who dared suggest that Daniel Prescott had erred in making his daughter Marion his paying teller. Not that Marion was not suited to the office, but that even Scarcrest knew that a woman teller was unusual.

Comment did not worry Prescott. His holdings in the bank amounted to more than 90 per cent of the capital invested, and at the directors' meeting he had offered to make another choice if the board could suggest any one better qualified through acquaintance or expertness at figures. That settled the matter officially, and when the spick and span new office opened it was Marion's pretty blond head which was seen through the plate glass square lettered "Paying Teller."

Bert Howard was the receiving teller, and this was further cause for gos-



"I SHALL HAVE TO GIVE YOU SOME GOLD," SAID MARION SWEETLY.

sp, for Bert had been a willing slave to Marion ever since the days when he used to drag her to school on his sled.

Many comments had been made in the postoffice and around the stove in Van Zan's grocery, but after Ned Davis had been soundly thrashed by Howard for suggesting that if the pair of them held their positions long enough they would have no trouble starting the property there was an abrupt cessation of this sort of gossip, and the bank officers were accepted without further comment.

But it was not pleasant sailing for Bert and Marion. He had been given his position not because Prescott approved of his suit for Marion's hand, but because, like Marion, he had been the most available person for the position. Prescott, in his hard, deep pitched voice, had assured the young man that if he ever caught a glimpse of love making in business hours there would be an imported teller in the bank within twenty-four hours.

So it was that man and maid were perforce content with such satisfaction as could come from the knowledge of the other's propinquity, and even Tony Dwight, who would have been glad to see his rival disposed of, could find no cause for tale bearing.

Dwight, with Prescott, Bert and Marion, constituted the clerical force of the First National, and, oddly enough, Prescott, usually an excellent judge of character, favored Tony's aspirations for Marion's hand. The one unpleasant feature of her position was the fact that she had frequently to consult Tony as bookkeeper, and he never let pass an opportunity to press his suit.

Then the agent of the Chester Bank Vault company came to Scarcrest one noon hour, driving over from the nearest railroad town behind a pair of quaking bays. Curtis was the name in one corner of the card he presented to Prescott as he strolled unannounced into the president's office.

But selling bank vaults was not his principal business, for after a while Prescott came out of his office. "Here is a check for which Mr. Curtis wants the cash," he said, thrusting the slip of paper through the window to Marion. "You have a package of thousand dollar bills in the corner of the small safe. There are twenty-five of these. He will take the other half in hundreds."

Marion looked curiously at her father's face, white and drawn.

"Are you sure this is all right?"

Curtis laughed lightly.

"You are not going to dishonor your father's own check, are you?" he said in careless fashion. "Mr. Prescott will assure you that it is all right."

He moved closer to the bank president, and Prescott, with the muzzle of a revolver pressed to his side, could

only nod his assent. Curtis had assured him that at the first sign of attempted communication with any of the two clerks all would be shot and he would be safe in the country before the crime was discovered. Prescott was a brave man, but he agreed with Curtis' argument that the money would do him little good if he were to be shot for refusing it.

Marion gave one more curious glance at the pair and turned toward the vault. In a moment she reappeared.

"Oh, Bert," she called, "will you please come here and help me to move this box?"

Howard went to her aid, while Curtis fidgeted about, urging Prescott to make haste. There was small danger of interruption from a customer or from Tony, who lunched at that hour; but, being a skilled workman, he liked to see a job done expeditiously.

In a couple of minutes the pair returned. Marion carried a package of bills, while Howard swung a bag covered with wax seals.

"I shall have to give you some gold," said Marion sweetly as she tumbled the bills on the shelf beneath the window of her cage and prepared to count. "You see, we keep most of our reserve on deposit in town, and for local use we have mostly small bills."

"Gold will do," responded Curtis amiably. "I am not particular, though, of course, the large bills are easier to handle."

Howard came around the corner with the gold, but before Curtis could grasp the bag of coins it descended upon his head with force sufficient to knock his heavy hat over his eyes and stun him before the ready pistol in his coat pocket could be fired.

Ten minutes later, under the reviving influence of ice water applied externally and brandy in internal applications, Curtis woke up. Howard stood over him, completing the work of securing him with rope.

"You will pardon me, Mr. Curtis," he said blandly, "for not recognizing you more quickly; but, you see, the slip sent out by the Bank of Tacoma gave your name as Peters, alias Mauvel and other names. In fact, Miss Prescott was the first one to see your game. No, I wouldn't hang Miss Prescott," he continued as he caught the muttered exclamation. "You know the proverb about curses and chickens roosting home. There is that little matter of killing the president and cashier of the First National of Caswell"—He turned to greet the sole peace officer of which the town boasted.

"That's him!" shouted Tony from the rear. "I saw him walk up and hit him over the head."

Constable Post looked about awkwardly. "I'm afraid there's some mistake," he growled. "You didn't tell me it was Mr. Howard you wanted arrested."

"Arrest Howard!" shouted Prescott. "Why, he's just knocked out one of the slickest bank thieves in the country and saved my life as well. Dwight, you get out of here, you miserable little sneak. Bert, I'll double the reward the Bank of Tacoma offers, and if you and Marion can't worry along on that and your salary you don't deserve to get married. Post, you take this fellow over to the lockup and give him a headache powder. I guess he needs it after that clip Bert gave him. I'm going to the telegraph office. Bert, you and Marion stay here and fix things up."

From his glance one could not tell whether he meant the disordered office or more important matters, but Bert and Marion knew or at least they used their own judgment.

**The Most Ancient Ruins.**

The oldest architectural ruins in the world are believed to be the rock cut temples at Ipsamboul, on the left bank of the Nile, in Nubia. The largest of these ancient temples contains fourteen apartments hewn out of solid stone. The largest single stone used in this work is one which forms a veranda-like projection along one side of the main temple. It is fifty-seven feet long, fifty-two broad and seventeen (one account says nineteen) feet thick. This colossal stone is supported by two rows of massive square pillars, four in each row and each thirty feet high. To each of these pillars is attached a colossal figure of a human being, reaching from floor to roof. In front of the main temple are seated still other colossal, four in number, the two largest being each sixty-five feet high.

The only hint we have as to the actual age of these architectural relics is from Smith, the British Egyptologist, who says, "The colossal attached to the columns which support the large stone mentioned are each painted in gaudy colors in a kind of stucco, apparently as brilliant now after a lapse of over 4,000 years as when first laid on."

**A Conclusive Speech.**

A story is told of a speech recently made by an Irish barrister in a court of law. He was for the plaintiff, whose cow had been knocked down and killed by a train, and this was the contention:

"If the train had been run as it should have been run, or if the bell had been rung as it should have been rung, or if the whistle had been blown as it should have been blown, both of which they did neither, the cow would not have been injured when she was killed."

**ACME LUMBER Company**

**DO YOU INTEND TO BUILD?**

If you haven't fully made up your mind, and are considering cost, come to us, and let us make you an estimate on cost of lumber, good dry lumber too. We have an immense stock, all grades.

Its a whole lot cheaper to own your own home than it is to pay rent, and we can prove it to your satisfaction if you give us a chance

We want to furnish you Lumber because its our business.

**ACME LUMBER CO.**

Foot Westanna St.

Phone East 1846