

A Captain In the Ranks

By...
GEORGE
CARY
EGGLESTON

Copyright, 1904, by A. S. Barnes & Co., Publishers, 154 Fifth Avenue, New York

(Continued from last Sunday)

CHAPTER VII.

DURING the next four or five days Guilford Duncan was kept busy with various small employments, some of them out of doors and some of them in the office. During this time Captain Hallam did not again engage him in conversation, but Duncan knew that the man of business was closely observing his work. He was not slow to discover that he was giving satisfaction. He saw that with each day the work assigned him was of a kind that required a higher intelligence than that of the day before.

Every evening the cashier paid him his day's wages, thus reminding him that he was not a salaried employee of the house, but a man working for wages from day to day.

Out of his first wages he had purchased a change of very cheap underwear, a towel and a cake of soap. Every morning about daylight he went to a secluded spot on the levee for a scrub and a swim. Then he washed out his towel and placed it, with his other small belongings, in a storage place he had discovered in a great lumber pile.

One morning when he entered the office Captain Hallam gave him several business letters to answer from memoranda scribbled upon them by clerks or others. He gave him also a memorandum in his own handwriting, saying:

"Cut that down if you can and make a telegram of it. I'll be back in half an hour or so. Have it ready for me."

The case was this: A huge steamboat lay at the levee loaded almost to the water's edge with grain, which Captain Hallam was more than anxious to hurry to New Orleans to meet a sudden temporary and very marked advance in that market. That morning the boat had been "tied up," as the phrase went—that is to say, she had been legally attached for debt at the suit of a firm in St. Louis. Until the

attachment should be removed the boat must lie at Cairo in charge of a sheriff's officer. Captain Hallam wished to secure her immediate release, and to that end he purposed sending the telegram.

When he returned to the office Duncan handed him for inspection and signature the letters he had written.

"Here is the telegram also," he said, "but if you will pardon the impertinence I think you had better not send it, at least in the form you have given it."

"What's the matter?" quickly snapped Hallam.

"It binds you to more than I think you intend."

"Go on! Explain."

"Why, I cannot help seeing that if you send this dispatch you will make yourself legally responsible, not only for the claim for which the boat is now attached, but also for every claim against her that may exist anywhere. There may be none such, or there may be many. In any case, I do not think you intend to assume them all."

"Go on! The boat must be got away. What do you advise?"

"That you go on her bond for this claim, which seems to me so clearly illegal that I think you can never be held upon the bond—and—"

"Remind me when this is over that you are to come to my house tonight for consultation on that point. Now go on."

"Well, by going on her bond for this claim instead of asking the creditors to release the boat on your promise as made in the telegram you can secure her immediate release, making yourself liable, at worst, for no more than the \$500 claimed."

"But if I do that, what is to prevent another tie-up at Memphis and another

released steamboat cast loose from the wharf and backed out into the river.

Then Captain Hallam turned to Guilford Duncan and said:

"I've an idea that you'll do. If you like I'll put you at regular work at a monthly salary, and we'll see how we get on together."

"I should like that."

"Very well. Now, where are you boarding?"

"Nowhere. I get what I want to eat at the booths down along the levee."

"But where do you sleep?"

"Among the big lumber piles down there on Fourth street."

Captain Hallam looked at the young man for a moment with something like admiration in his eyes. Presently he said:

"You must live better now. There's a well furnished room above the office. It was my brother's quarters before he got married, and it is very comfortable. You can take it for your own. Give Dutch John, the scrub boy, half a dollar a week to take care of it for you, and that's all the rent you need pay. As for your meals, most young men in Cairo feed their faces at the hotel. But that's expensive, and what the proprietor calls his 'kuzene' is distinctly bad. There's a lady, however, Mrs. Deming, who furnishes very good 'square meals.' I hear, over in Walnut street. You'd better try there, I think. She's what you would call a gentlewoman, but she needs all the money you'll pay her."

CHAPTER VIII.

AS the weeks and months went on the results of Guilford Duncan's work completely justified the confident assertion he had made to Captain Hallam that a capable man can learn anything if he really wants to.

He rapidly familiarized himself with the technicalities as well as with the methods and broad principles of business. He sat up till midnight for many nights in succession in order to learn from the head bookkeeper the rather secret mysteries of bookkeeping. By observing the gaugers who measured coal barges to determine their contents he quickly acquired skill in doing that.

It was so with everything. He was determined to master every art and mystery that in anywise pertained to business, whether the skill in question was or was not one that he was ever likely to need or to practice.

His diligence, his conscientiousness in work, his readiness of resource, his alert intelligence and his sturdy integrity daily commended him more and more to the head of the firm, and not many months had passed before every one in the office tacitly recognized the young Virginian as the confidential adviser and assistant of Captain Hallam himself, though no formal appointment of that kind had been made.

But no advance of salary came to the young man as a result. It was one of Captain Hallam's rules never to pay a man more for his services than he must and never to advance a man's salary until the advance was asked for.

Captain Hallam was in no fiber of his being a miser, but he acted always upon those cold blooded prudential principles that had brought him wealth. It was not money that this great captain of commerce worshiped, but success. Success was the one god of his idolatry. Outside of his business he was liberal in the extreme. Even in his business operations he never hesitated at lavish expenditure where such expenditure promised good results. But he regarded all unnecessary spending as waste, of the kind that imperils success.

In his cynical moments, indeed, he sometimes said that "if you have a valuable man in your employ you must keep him poor; otherwise you'll lose him." But in so saying he perhaps did himself an injustice. He was apt to feign a heartless selfishness that he did not feel.

Little by little Guilford Duncan had learned all this as he had learned business methods. He had at first modestly proposed to himself nothing more in the way of achievement than to make himself a valuable subordinate—a private or at most a corporal or a sergeant—in the ranks of the great army of work. But before many months had passed his modesty was compelled to yield somewhat to an increasingly clear understanding of conditions and possibilities. Somewhat to his own surprise he began to suspect himself of possessing capacities superior to those of the men about him and even superior to those of many men who had risen to high place in commerce and finance.

As Captain Hallam came more and more to rely upon the sagacity and character of this his most trusted man, he more and more brought young Duncan into those confidential conferences with the leading men of affairs which were frequently necessary in the planning and execution of important enterprises or in the meeting of difficulties and obstacles. In that way Duncan was brought into personal contact with the recognized masters, big and little,

with railroad presidents, financiers, bankers, capitalists and other men whose positions were in a greater or less degree commanding.

At first he modestly held himself as nothing more than the tool and servitor of these great men, but presently he began to suspect that they were not very great men after all—to see that it was usually he himself who devised and suggested the enterprises that these men undertook, and he who saved them from mistakes in the execution of those enterprises.

Guilford Duncan had never in his life kept a diary. He regarded that practice as a useless puerility and usually an indulgence in morbid self-consciousness, but it was his practice sometimes late at night to set down upon paper such thoughts as had interested him during the day for the sole sake of formulating them in his own mind. Often he would in this way discuss with himself questions concerning which he had not yet matured his opinion.

"I've been in conference this day," he wrote one night, "with half a dozen nabobs—not great nabobs, but second rate ones. All this has put a new thought into my mind. Why should not I, Guilford Duncan, make myself a leader, a captain or even a commanding general of affairs? But the man who would do things of any consequence in business ways must have money. The bank account is his tool chest."

"I suggested some combinations tonight to those nabobs, and they are going to carry them out. They would never have thought of the combinations but for my suggestion. But they can and will carry them out, with great credit and profit to themselves, because they have command of money. I could not even think of conducting such affairs, simply because I have no command of money."

"Very well, then. I shall proceed to get money, just as I should study to acquire skill in a profession or just as I should read up the law pertaining to a matter with which I must deal."

Duncan was greatly admired but little understood by his fellows in the service of the Hallam firm or by the similar people who thronged the town. His fellows in and out of the office were commonplace young men, all looking to the main chance alone and pursuing it with only such honesty of conduct as business prudence required. They felt no further interest in their work than such as was necessary to enable them to retain their places and their salaries.

Therefore they did not understand Guilford Duncan. Neither could they. They regarded with amazement and almost with incredulity his manifestations of sensitive honor and of unselfish loyalty to duty. They thought of him as a sort of freak or what we should nowadays call a crank.

Of course they could not fail to recognize his ability, but they thought him a good deal of a fool, nevertheless, for not taking selfish advantage of the opportunities that so frequently came to him. They could not understand why he should go out of his way, as he very often did, to render services to the firm which were in no way required or expected of him. Especially they could not understand why, when he had rendered such services in a way to attract Captain Hallam's pleased attention, he didn't "strike for something better," as they phrased their thought.

In one especial case their amazement over his neglect of an opportunity bred something like contempt of him in their minds. It was the practice

(Continued on page 6)

It is a question if even Missouri will enthuse over Bryan when he presents himself arm in arm with Grover.

THE CHINOOK BAR

415 BOND ST.,
ASTORIA, OREGON

Carries the Finest Line of
**Wines,
Liquors
and
Cigars**

CALL AND SEE US

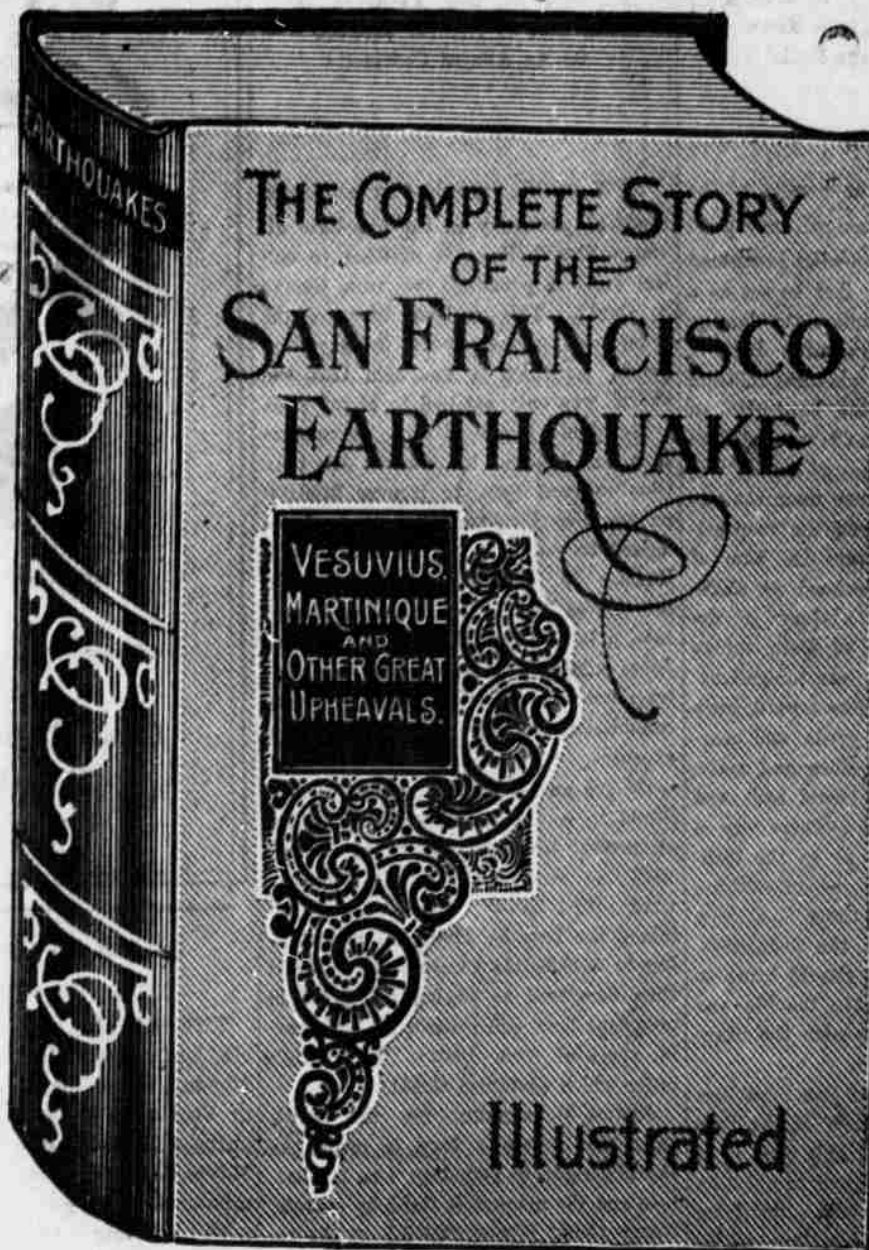
BAMBOO FURNITURE

PAPER RACKS,
TABLES,
STANDS,
CHAIRS,
ETC.,
HAND MADE, ELEGANTLY
FINISHED.

Yokohama Bazaar

826 Commercial Street, Astoria

A Wonderful Book of 400 Pages



Thoroughly Illustrated
By 265 Actual Photographs
taken at the time of the Awful
Catastrophe

This great book which retails at \$1.50
and so much desired by every one is now
offered as a premium with

The Morning Astorian

In order to get the Book subscribe for
the MORNING ASTORIAN at the regular
subscription rate, 65c a month and 50c
additional to cover cost of express-
age. Old subscribers can get this
book by paying the additional charge of 50c.

Only a limited number of books
will be given away---come early and
avoid the rush.



"If you like I'll put you at regular work at a monthly salary."

er at Vicksburg and others wherever the boat may happen to land? She's in debt up to the top of her smokestacks all along the river."

"As you own the cargo and she can't carry another ton, why should you let her stop at all? I suppose the captain would do as you desire in that matter."

The captain understood. After half an hour spent in legal formalities, the