

Thrust Upon Him

By OTHO B. SENG

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Squire Hart looked the young fellow over keenly.

"M-m!" giving his pudgy hand to the clasp of the long, thin one extended in greeting, "Ralph Reed, eh? And what do you do? Football, I suppose, like the rest of these donkeys!"

Reed laughed good humoredly. "No, Mr. Hart, I wouldn't stand the ghost of a chance in a rush. I'm on the track team."

"He's the champion sprinter, papa," interposed Elsie eagerly. "He won five points for the blue in the intercollegiate contest!"

Her father frowned at her enthusiasm, and Reed's thin, brown face colored.

"You ought to run," grumbled the squire, continuing his examination of the young fellow; "you're built like a greyhound or a grasshopper!"

Reed, outwardly at ease, flinched inwardly under the squire's keen scrutiny. His compact with the pretty Elsie would be null and void without her father's consent, and he felt that his athletic career was a detriment in the eyes of the older man. He was not at all encouraged by the remarks that followed.

"I don't believe in it," frantically. "Boys go to college to study, or ought to, and they make a business of some kind of foolish play. If those football fellows," pointing to the three other young men who were his daughter's guests for the spring vacation, "had to work one-half as hard sawing wood or plowing, they'd think they were terribly abused."

Some one called Elsie, and she hurried away, giving a pleading glance at her lover which he interpreted as counseling him to patience.

"And as for running," continued the squire, with increasing cholera, for he, too, had seen the pleading glance, "as for running, why should a man of ordi-



THEN A STREAK OF BLUE DASHED BY HIM. nary courage care to excel as a runner? Running is an accomplishment for cowards!"

The blood rushed to the dark face, but Reed spoke quietly and courteously.

"There are things to run for as well as things to run from, Mr. Hart, and I hope I'd not be lacking if a test of courage came to me."

It was a merry party that roamed over the fields and through the woods searching for the earliest spring flowers; that rode and drove and sang and danced.

Young Reed and his fair hostess carried heavy hearts that made gayety an effort and laughter a mockery. The squire had refused to sanction their engagement, to listen to any suggestion or to make any promises for the future.

"I'll wait," he said grimly, "until you have shown that you can do something besides run!"

Apparently oblivious to the sports of the guests at Hart's home, the squire had kept a keen eye on them all. He rather admired the dogged pertinacity with which Reed took his daily run of three or four miles over the country roads. He smiled grimly when he saw the young fellow start out as if for a walk wearing a long raincoat over his running togs.

"Doesn't mean to give any unnecessary offense to the 'cruel parent,'" chuckled the squire appreciatively, "but intends to have his own way just the same."

"It'll be rather quiet and lonely at the house tomorrow," soliloquized the squire as he drove along, sniffing the fresh, clear air of the bright spring morning. "The lads and lassies all go today. I wish I hadn't been quite so sharp with Elsie and that young fellow. He seems a fine, manly chap. But what on earth does he want to run for?" ending irritably. "Hello, Bartlett, what's the matter with your horse?"

He had reached the top of a long, steep hill, and overtaken a neighbor with a heavy load of rock.

"Suppose I hitch in my team and take the load down for you," suggested the squire. "It's all level after we pass my house. You can lead yours down. Sit still, Betty Bartlett, and hold on tight," playfully addressing the little girl perched on the seat. "My horses are frisky, you know."

Bartlett had locked the wagon wheels preparatory to making the descent, but as the squire lifted the tongue for the other horses to be hitched in the lock chain snapped and broke and the heavily loaded wagon started down the hill.

He shouted to Bartlett, who, hampered by the four horses, lost his head and only bawled, "Whoa, Hart, whoa!"

Hart held on to the tongue and braced back with all his strength, but despite his efforts the wagon went flying down the hill like an engine on down grade.

"Hold on tight, Betty," the squire managed to scream.

He knew that if he dropped the tongue the wagon would be tipped over instantly and that there would be small chance indeed for the life of the child; so he too "held on tight" and ran as if fleeing from death.

"Go on, horse," cried Betty, in great glee; "go faster!"

The squire couldn't spare breath now even to groan. The heavy wagon, with a ton of rock behind him, crashed and roared, bounced over the rough places in the road, struck fire from cut stones, and the man ran till his legs seemed merely rags fluttering in a fierce wind.

Almost at the foot! If only he could hold out a few seconds more! And then he tried to close his eyes—for there, crossing the road, directly in the path from which he dared not diverge, was a little scarlet clad figure drawing a child's cart!

Bobby—his own little Bobby! He tried to pray, he tried again to close his eyes, and then a streak of blue dashed by him, the scarlet spot was caught up and rushed to safety!

He jumped instinctively when he reached the little cart, and it was crushed to pieces under the thundering wheels.

He had reached the level. He could feel the slackening of the terrific speed, but he still ran on, miles it seemed to him now, before he could stop the demon that was forcing him onward.

"Go on, horse! Glidd up!" cried the insatiate Betty as the squire dropped limp to the ground. "You can be my horse now," she remarked complacently to the first of the young men who reached the side of the exhausted squire.

They quickly improvised a stretcher from the blankets and carried the unconscious man to the house.

He opened his eyes after awhile and looked anxiously about him.

"Bobby's all right," said some one quickly, "and the little girl—and—and, I guess, everybody."

"Ralph!" gasped the squire. "Here I am, Mr. Hart," bending over him.

"I am glad you can run," faintly. "So am I, Mr. Hart," feelingly. "I feared you were going to run over me, though."

"We'll have to concede you to be the champion sprinter!" cried one of the other men. "That was a pretty long dash, sure enough!"

"Ralph must yield the palm to you, squire," added another jovially.

The squire shook his head feebly. "He—he 'achieved' it," he whispered, his eyes on Ralph's fine face, "but it—it was"—He sighed wearily.

"It was 'thrust upon you,' you mean, squire," understandingly.

The squire smiled grimly in acquiescence.

Cromwell's Burial Place.

The thirty acres of this great cemetery (Abney Park) include the site of another large old house and its grounds, Fleetwood House, once the residence of General Fleetwood and his wife, who was Bridget, the daughter of Oliver Cromwell. This sight is to the right of the avenue, and there one summer day, among older and plainer tombstones than those of the Abney, or opposite, side, I saw men mowing the long grass and presently came upon a mound inclosed with an iron rail. The mound itself was covered with ivy, but trimmed so that one could read on a red granite slab the words, "This mound was a favorite retirement of the late Isaac Watts, D. D." Tradition says he loved that mound because from it he could see the open country. It is now hemmed in by houses, but the mound is still solitary. Another tradition tells of a rumor current soon after Cromwell's death to the effect that the Protector's body was not in the coffin that was buried with regal pomp in the abbey, but had been secretly brought down to his daughter's house and laid to rest where now is the mound.—Christian World.

POINTED PARAGRAPHS.

Experience is a great teacher. So is a real estate boom.

The more a man knows the less he admits to knowing.

All of us can't be in the same boat. If we were, we'd sink it.

Let the other fellow have his way as long as he only wants to talk.

Elections and marriages are just alike. There is nothing the candidate will not promise beforehand.

If you are going to give both barrels, do it like a man—give them to the victim's face and not behind his back.

Nothing makes a man quite so ill-natured as to be expected to be grateful for something that does not please him.

There is a great deal said about love at first sight; not much said about the hatred at first offense, which is more sure.—Aitchison Globe.

Bowser Fits Fly Screens

Cook Tells of the Desperate Struggles He Underwent in the Work.

SURPRISE FOR HIS WIFE

Before He Was Through It Had Become Necessary to Turn In a Fire Alarm

[Copyright, 1906, by C. H. Sutcliffe.]

THE other evening I heard Mrs. Bowser saying to Mr. Bowser that it was time to put up fly screens and asking him if he wouldn't send up a carpenter to do the work.

"Not on your life!" he exclaimed in reply. "There are twelve windows and twelve fly screens to fit them. A carpenter would be about six days, at an expense of \$3 a day, putting them up while I can do the work in one hour."

"But when you put them up last year you got mad and broke a clotheshorse at the back door."

"Never! You are thinking of some other man and some other house. Never got mad and never broke a clotheshorse. In a day or two I shall put the screens up myself and save the \$18."

Mrs. Bowser said no more. I think she was intending to get a man to do the work and pay him out of her own pocket, but the next afternoon while she was out shopping Mr. Bowser



ALL OF A SUDDEN THE HOUSE SHOOK.

came home. It was at about 3 o'clock, and when I looked surprised he explained:

"It's all right, Sarah. Business isn't driving just now, and I'm home to put those screens up. They are up in the storeroom, I suppose?"

"Yes, sir, but they need to be dusted off. I am ironing today and can't help you."

Surprise For Mrs. B.

"Never mind the dusting. The style this summer is to have fly screens look as ancient as possible. Mrs. Bowser out, eh? Well, I'll hustle the screens up and give her a surprise."

He was into his old clothes and bringing the screens down in ten minutes. If each screen had ever been marked for a certain window the marks had been painted out, and Mr. Bowser had to go by guesswork. He began with the parlor windows first. I heard him knocking and banging and pounding away for a long time, and then he called from the head of the basement stairs:

"Sarah, I want you for a moment."

When I got up, there he stood in a dramatic attitude pointing to one of the windows with outstretched arm, and the red was coming and going in his face and neck.

"Do you see it?" he hoarsely whispered as he still pointed.

"I see that the screen is short for the window, sir."

"Yes, you see it is all of six inches too short. Why? Answer me why."

"Because you've got the wrong screen for the window."

"Because either you or Mrs. Bowser has saved six inches off the top to battle me! Don't tell me that a fly screen can shrink six inches in a season or that window frames can lengthen the same distance. By John, but—"

Found Right Screen.

I pulled the screen out of the window and after a moment found the right one and replaced it and returned to my work without a word. He looked after me, and I heard him mumbling under his breath. He got the other screen in after a good deal of banging, and then he started to fit those in the back parlor. I knew that the screens he had down would never fit, but it wasn't my business to butt in. He moved the chairs around and banged at the sashes, and all of a sudden the house shook. I ran upstairs to find him on the floor with one of his feet through the wire screen. He was that dazed that he let me help him up, but no sooner was he on his feet than he shouted out:

"By the seventeen pipers, but I'll have gone for this woman!"

"I am not Mrs. Bowser, sir," I said as he tried to kick the screen off his leg.

"But you helped her to put up this job to assassinate me."

"No one has tried to assassinate you. You must have stumbled and gone down. Can't you see that those screens are for the back bedrooms upstairs?"

He sat down, breathing hard and glowering at me, and I ran up and got the right screens and fitted them in a jiffy. He felt ashamed of his display of temper and started in to tell me that he didn't believe I was in the conspiracy to saw his leg off, but I did not stop to listen to the whole of it. A few minutes later I heard him going upstairs, putting each foot down as if stamping off snow, and then all was quiet for ten minutes. I then felt it a duty I owed to Mrs. Bowser to go up and rescue him. He had torn down curtains and pole from one of the front windows and moved both bed and bureau in his efforts to fit the kitchen door to a window not half its size. He was looking around for some living thing to pour out the vials of his wrath on when he caught sight of me and burst out with:

"I was just about to call you. Do you deny that you have gone and tacked an extra piece on to this screen in order to spite me?"

"Needed New Pair of Eyes."

"Haven't you got eyes in your head?" I asked. "If I had a brother ten years old who couldn't tell the difference between a screen door and a window screen I'd get a pair of glass eyes for him."

"Are you claiming that that is a screen door?" he whooped.


"Of course it is. Isn't it two feet too long for the window? Isn't there a handle on it? I'm only a poor girl, sir, with a red-headed mother and a fellow with a glass eye for a bean, but I can tell an elephant from a mouse."

"I'll be hanged if you ain't right," he said, with a smile, after taking a long look at the door. "I suppose I must have been thinking about trading the house and lot for a chicken farm. You needn't mention the incident to Mrs. Bowser. Thanks for coming up. I am sure I can manage the others."

As I went downstairs I left him whistling away and feeling better. He got the screens into the windows after half an hour's work started out for his trying to make them fit bottom side up, and then he came down to the kitchen with the screen door. He had recovered all his personality and conceit, and he didn't mind upsetting the clotheshorse as he dragged the screen through. I watched him as he stood the door up. It was tip side down. He stood back and surveyed it and shook his head and muttered:

(Concluded on page 6)

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D. D. D. Co., Chicago.

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REV. T. H. WILLIS.

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Conserville, Ind., Feb. 4, 1906.
D. D. D. Co., Chicago.

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