

THE CONQUEST of CANAAN

By BOOTH TARKINGTON,
Author of "Cherry," "Monsieur Beaucaire," Etc.

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CHAPTER X.

HE woke to the light of morning amazed and full of a strange wondrous because he did not know what had amazed him. A chime of bells sounded from a church steeple across the square, ringing out in assured righteousness, announcing the good people who maintained them to come and sit beneath them or be taken to task and they fell so dismally upon Joe's war that he bestirred himself and rose, to the delight of his mongrel, who leaped upon him joyfully. An hour later or thereabout the pair emerged from the narrow stairway and stood for a moment, blinking in the fair sunshine, apparently undecided which way to go. The church bells were silent. There was no breeze. The air trembled a little with the deep pipings of the organ across the square, and, save for that, the town was very quiet. The paths which crossed the courthouse yard were flecked with steady shadows, the strong young foliage of the maples not moving, having the air of observing the Sabbath with propriety. The organ ceased to stir the air, and all was in quiet, yet a quiet which for Louisa was not peace. He looked at his watch and, without intending it, spoke the hour aloud, "A quarter past 11." The sound of his own voice gave him a little shock. He rose without knowing why, and as he did so it seemed to him that he heard close to his ear another voice, a woman's, troubled and insistent, but clear and sweet, saying:

"Remember! Across Main street bridge at noon!"

It was so distinct that he started and looked round. Then he laughed. "I'll be seeing circus parades next." His laughter died, for louder than the ringing in his ears, unmistakably came the strains of a faraway brass band which had no existence on land, or sea or in the waters under the earth.

"Here!" he said to the mongrel. "We need a walk, I think. Let's you and me move on before the camels turn the corner."

The music followed him to the street, where he turned westward toward the river, and presently as he walked on, fanning himself with his straw hat, it faded and was gone. But the voice he had heard returned.

"Remember! Across Main street bridge at noon!" it said again close to his ear.

This time he did not start. "All right," he answered, wiping his forehead. "If you'll let me alone, I'll be there."

At a dingy saloon corner near the river a shabby little man greeted him heartily and petted the mongrel. "I'm mighty glad you didn't go, after all, Joe," he added, with a brightening face.

"Go where, Happy?"
Mr. Fear looked grave. "Don't you recollect meetin' me last night?"
Louisa shook his head. "No. Did I?"

The other's jaw fell, and his brow corrugated with self reproach. "Well, if that don't show what a thick head I am! I thought ye was all right or I'd gone on with ye. Nobody e'd 'a' walk-ed straighter ner talked straighter. Said ye was goin' to leave Canaan fer good and didn't want nobody to know it. Said ye was goin' to take the 'leven o'clock through train fer the west and told me I couldn't come to the deespo with ye. Said ye'd had enough o' Canaan and of everything. I follered ye part way to the deespo, but ye turned and made a motion fer me to go back, and I done it because ye seemed to be kind in 'n trouble, and I thought ye'd ruther be by yerself. Well, sir, it's one on me."

"Not at all," said Joe. "I was all right."
"Was ye?" returned the other. "Do remember, do ye?"

"Almost," Joe smiled faintly.
"Almost," echoed Happy, shaking his head seriously. "I tell ye, Joe, ef I was you"—he began slowly, then paused and shook his head again. He seemed on the point of delivering some advice, but evidently perceiving the snobbishness of such a proceeding, or else convinced by his own experience of the futility of it, he swerved to cheerfulness.

"I hear the boys is all goin' to work hard for the primaries. Mike says ye got some chances ye don't know about. He swears ye'll be the next mayor of Canaan."

"Nonsense! Folly and nonsense, Happy! That's the kind of thing I used to think when I was a boy. But now—pshaw!" Joe broke off with a tired laugh. "Tell them not to waste their time! Abe you going out to the Beach this afternoon?"

The little man lowered his eyes moodily. "I'll be near there," he said, scraping his patched shoe up and down the curbstone. "That feller's in town ag'in."

"What fellow?"
"Nashville" they call him. Ed's the name he give the hospital. Cory—him that I soaked the night you come back to Canaan. He's after Claudine to get his evens with me. He's made a raise

somewhere's and plays the spender. And her—well, I reckon she's tired waitin' table at the National House, tired o' me, too. I got a hint that they're goin' out to the Beach together this afternoon."

Joe passed his hand wearily over his aching forehead. "I understand," he said, "and you'd better try to. Cory's laying for you, of course. You say he's after your wife? He must have set about it pretty open if they're going to the Beach today, for there is always a crowd there on Sundays. Is it hard for you to see why he's doing it? It's because he wants to make you jealous. What for? So that you'll tackle him again. And why does he want that? Because he's ready for you!"

The other's eyes suddenly became bloodshot, his nostrils expanding incredibly. "Ready, is he? He better be ready, I!"

"That's enough!" Joe interrupted swiftly. "We'll have no talk like that. I'll settle this for you myself. You send word to Claudine that I want to see her at my office tomorrow morning, and you—stay away from the Beach today. Give me your word."

Mr. Fear's expression softened. "All right, Joe," he said. "I'll do whatever you tell me to. Any of us 'll do that; we sure know who's our friend."
"Keep out of trouble, Happy," Joe turned to go and they shook hands. "Good day, and—keep out of trouble!"

When he had gone Mr. Fear's countenance again gloomed ominously, and, shaking his head, he ruminatively entered an adjacent bar through the alley door.

The Main street bridge was an old fashioned wooden covered one, dust colored and very narrow, squarely framing the fair open country beyond. For the town had never crossed the river. Joe found the cool shadow in the bridge gracious to his hot brow, and through the slender chinks of the worn flooring he caught bright glimpses of running water. When he came out of the other end he felt enough refreshed to light a cigar.

"Well, here I am," he said, "across Main street bridge, and it must be getting on toward noon!" He spoke almost with the aspect of daring and immediately stood still listening. "Remember," he ventured to repeat, again daring—"remember! Across Main street bridge at noon!" And again he listened. Then he chuckled faintly with relief, for the voice did not return. "Thank God, I've got rid of that!" he whispered. "And of the circus band too!"

A dusty road turned to the right, following the river and shaded by big cypresses on the bank. The mongrel, intensely preoccupied with his road, scampered away, his nose to the ground. "Good enough," said the master. "Lead on and I'll come after you."

But he had not far to follow. The chase led him to a half hollow log which lay on a low grassy levee above the stream where the dog's interest in the pursuit became vivid; temporarily, however, for after a few minutes of agitated investigation he was seized with indifference to the whole world, panted briefly, slept. Joe sat upon the log, which was in the shade, and smoked.

For the first time it struck Joe that it was a beautiful day, and it came to him that a beautiful day was a thing which nothing except death, sickness or imprisonment could take from him, not even the ban of Canaan. Unforewarned music sounded in his ears again, but he did not shrink from it now. This was not the circus band he had heard as he left the square, but a melody like a faraway serenade at night, as of "the horns of elf land faintly blowing," and he closed his eyes with the sweetness of it.

"Go ahead," he whispered. "Do that all you want to. If you'll keep it up like this awhile, I'll follow with 'Little Brown Jug, How I Love Thee!' It seems to pay after all!"

The welcome strains, however, were but the prelude to a harsher sound which interrupted and annihilated them—the courthouse bell clanging out 12. "All right," said Joe. "It's noon, and I'm 'cross Main street bridge."

He opened his eyes and looked about him whimsically. Then he shook his head again.

A lady had just emerged from the bridge and was coming toward him.

It would be hard to get at Joe's first impressions of her. We can find conveyance for only the broadest and heaviest. Ancient and modern instances multiply the case of the sleeper who dreams out a long story in accurate color and fine detail, a tale of years, in the opening and shutting of a door. So with Joseph in the brief space of the lady's approach. And with him, as with the sleeper, it must have been—in fact it was—in his recollections later a blur of emotion.

He had little knowledge of the millinery arts, and he needed none to see the harmony—harmony like that of the day he had discovered a little while ago. Her dress and hat and gloves and

GREAT LAKES RESPONSIBLE.

In Part For The Present Car Shortage By Delay In Unloading.

CHICAGO, April 27.—The problem of reducing the time for unloading cars at Lake ports loaded with freight for steamship lines was under discussion yesterday at the meeting of the American Railway Association. The representatives of the marine lines were invited to participate in the discussion and responded to the number of 49. It was estimated that 75,000 cars arrived at Lake ports with freight for steamers during the season of navigation and the average delay in unloading cars in six working days. At some ports the lack of facilities caused the delay and at others the non-arrival of the vessels to which the cargo was consigned. It was generally conceded that an improvement could be made in the handling of the cars and even if the average was reduced but one day it would mean the use of 75,000 cars for that time, and an additional income to the railroads of approximately \$750,000.

The water lines were agreeable to rendering whatever assistance possible and to that end a committee was named by them to co-operate with the care efficiency committee of the association. This included the business of the meeting and the association adjourned to meet at Norfolk, Va.

The car efficiency committee held a preliminary meeting, arranging the details for taking a vote on the question of an adequate fine to be imposed for the misuse of cars. The proposition of fining the lines \$5 a trip for using foreign cars in local runs does not meet with universal favor and some of the general managers favor doubling the fine, it would be economy on the part of some roads to pay \$5 a trip when the revenue of a car loaded with merchandise for local points may be as much as \$150 on a trip of 100 miles.

CONSTRUCTION DELAYED.

Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul Await Cheaper Material and Labor.

NEW YORK, April 27.—The Tribune today says:

At a meeting of the directors of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St. Paul held this week the question of the company's Pacific Coast extension was discussed. According to an interest identified with the road, the opinion was about unanimous that the work of carrying the St. Paul lines to Seattle should not be abandoned. One of the largest stockholders said, however, that the construction of the road would be delayed until a reduction in the cost of material and labor had been made.

When recently seen the president of the St. Paul company said chances favored the abandoning of the coast extension as a result of restrict legislation.

The Pacific extension from the company's western terminus at Glenham, S. D., to Seattle and Tacoma will cover 1564 miles.

paralol showed a pale lavender overtint like that which he had seen over-spreading the western slope. (Afterward he discovered that the gloves she wore that day were gray and that her hat was for the most part white.) The charm of fabric and tint belonging to what she wore was no shame to her, not being of primal importance beyond herself. It was but the expression of her daintiness and the adjunct of it. She was tall, but if Joe could have spoken or thought of her as "slender" he would have been capable of calling her lips "red," in which case he would not have been Joe and would have been as far from the truth as her lips were from red or as her supreme delicateness was from mere slenderness.

She was to pass him—so he thought—and as she drew nearer his breath came faster.

"Remember! Across Main street bridge at noon!"
Was this the fay of whom the voice had warned him? With that, there befell him the mystery of last night. He did not remember, but it was as if he lived again dimly the highest hour of happiness in a life a thousand years ago; perfume and music, roses, nightingales and plucked harpstrings. Yes, something wonderful was happening to him.

She had stopped directly in front of him—stopped and stood looking at him with her clear eyes. He did not lift his own to hers. He had long experience of the averted gaze of women, but it was not only that. A great shyness beset him. He had risen and removed his hat, trying (ineffectually) not to clear his throat, his every day sense urging upon him that she was a stranger in Canaan who had lost her way—the preposterousness of any one's losing the way in Canaan not just now appealing to his every day sense.

"Can I—can I"—he stammered, blushing miserably, meaning to finish with "direct you," or "show you the way."

Then he looked at her again and saw what seemed to him the strangest sight of his life. The lady's eyes had filled with tears—filled and overflowed.

"I'll sit here on the log with you," she said. And her voice was the voice which he had heard saying: "Remember! Across Main street bridge at noon!"

"What!" he gasped.
"You don't need to dust it!" she went on tremulously. And even then he did not know who she was.

(To be continued next Sunday)

RIDGELY TO SUCCEED ECKLES.

Controller of Currency To Be President of Commercial National Bank.

CHICAGO, April 27.—William B. Ridgely, Federal Controller of the Currency is to succeed the late James H. Eckles as president of the Commercial National Bank, according to a persistent rumor which gained credence last night both in Washington and Chicago.

The choice of Mr. Ridgely was given out by the directors of the bank but many financial men were inclined to put faith in the report.

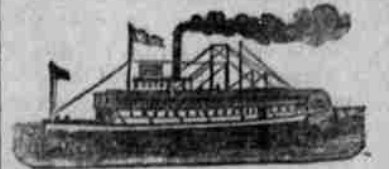
The Commercial National Bank is one of the largest financial institutions of the city. According to the last statement it has a capital of \$2,000,000 and deposits of \$39,325,381.

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