

Orange Blossoms

By FRANK H. SWEET.

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HIRAM JUDSON was disturbed. It was not business matters alone that troubled him, but a mixture of business and family matters. He cordially detested the combination, having endeavored to raise his children, particularly his son Fred, in simple honesty and without too much knowledge of business life from the speculative side.

He did not know whether to be glad or sorry that he had read all the new novels dealing with the stock market entanglements and gone to modern business plays appearing at the theater. It was one thing to have knowledge of the realistic side of dealing in stocks for his own sake and quite another to discover through this wisdom disagreeable complications involving his son, his trusted stenographer, Miss Alice Cresswell, and heaven only knew how many more. His wife and daughter might be pitted against him for all he knew. Such things were common in the books he had read and the plays he had seen.

It was shortly after he began cornering the orange market that the discovery was made. He remembered but vaguely the first instance when his attention had been drawn to a strip of white paper lying upon the stenographer's desk, on which a number of characters from the typewriter were inscribed.

He paid no particular attention to the matter at the time, but since then the strips of paper had appeared more frequently. Yesterday he had discovered a new one, and when Miss Cresswell was out to lunch his suspicions led him to examine her desk, disclosing several more.

Judson held the strips of paper in his fingers. They were apparently innocent, and all bore a harmless series of typewriter characters. The one he had discovered the previous day had the following marks upon it:

28XXX 697 XT: = 59546 65 32@37

The more he looked at the odd characters upon the strips of paper the more Judson felt within him that he had stumbled upon an incriminating cipher. Perhaps he was the victim of a plot. The question rang in his ears incessantly in spite of himself.

The idea made him shudder, for he had a suspicion that his son Fred had

left the incriminating paper on ALICE Cresswell's desk. It had appeared there shortly before she went to lunch, when Fred was in the room, and within five minutes after he left Miss Cresswell put on her jacket rather hastily and followed.

He had the Florida orange crop well in hand, but there was a hitch in the southern California product. Matters had to be handled skillfully, and a little information placed in certain hands would undoubtedly ruin him at this particular time. He had always had perfect confidence in Miss Cresswell. She was the daughter of a former business associate who had failed, and Judson had given the girl work in his office, which she needed badly. His son, of course, was the apple of his eye and would ultimately fall heir to his immense fortune. Fred was just finishing up his law studies and had never dabbled in stocks—at least to his father's knowledge. He had no money to dabble in them with, and yet—those books—those plays!

"I wish I had never read those books or seen those plays," said Judson to himself. "I would rather my son would rob me of my last penny than that I should distrust him for a single moment."

With this he tried to dismiss the matter from his mind, but the cipher had done its work.

He could make nothing of the characters on the paper strips. The question mark at the close of the one he had found the previous day he took literally. Somebody wanted to know something. Miss Cresswell knew his secrets thoroughly. Was Fred trying to sell him out? The question fairly burned into his brain.

Next day Judson was on the alert. Fred came into the office shortly before noon, as usual, and they passed customary greetings. The young man apparently paid no attention to Miss Cresswell, yet Judson observed him leave a strip of paper on her desk. The girl studied it intently, while all appearances going on with her typewriting.

Fred left the office, and in a short time Judson saw Miss Cresswell slip the paper under her notebook and prepare to leave. When she had gone Judson rushed eagerly to get the paper.

He examined it as closely as he had done the others, but the characters were Greek to him. Today they were as follows:

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Oct. Official Tide Tables

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OCTOBER, 1908.					OCTOBER, 1908.				
High Water.	A. M.	P. M.	Low Water.	A. M.	P. M.	High Water.	A. M.	P. M.	Low Water.
Date.	h. m.	h. m.	Date.	h. m.	h. m.	Date.	h. m.	h. m.	Date.
Thursday.....	1 4:38	6 4:12	8.1	Thursday.....	1 10:06	2 11:09	0.7	Thursday.....	1 10:06
Friday.....	2 5:42	6 5:08	7.8	Friday.....	2 11:02	3 7.....	0.4	Friday.....	2 11:02
Saturday.....	3 7:08	6 5:19	7.5	Saturday.....	3 0:15	0 8:12	21 4.0	Saturday.....	3 0:15
SUNDAY.....	4 8:27	6 5:43	7.4	SUNDAY.....	4 1:29	0 8:16	4.0	SUNDAY.....	4 1:29
Monday.....	5 9:24	6 5:08	7.7	Monday.....	5 2:45	0 8:25	3.6	Monday.....	5 2:45
Tuesday.....	6 10:27	7 4:10	11 8.0	Tuesday.....	6 3:50	0 8:32	2.7	Tuesday.....	6 3:50
Wednesday.....	7 11:10	8 0:11	10 8.4	Wednesday.....	7 4:47	0 4:53	1.8	Wednesday.....	7 4:47
Thursday.....	8 11:49	8.....	.....	Thursday.....	8 5:35	0 4:56	0.9	Thursday.....	8 5:35
Friday.....	9 0:02	8 4:12	27 9.0	Friday.....	9 6:18	0 5:00	0.8	Friday.....	9 6:18
Saturday.....	10 0:51	8 3:10	9.2	Saturday.....	10 7:00	0 7:34	-0.1	Saturday.....	10 7:00
SUNDAY.....	11 1:38	8 5:14	9.3	SUNDAY.....	11 7:45	1 2 8:19	-0.4	SUNDAY.....	11 7:45
Monday.....	12 2:25	8 9:20	9.2	Monday.....	12 8:28	1 2 9:05	-0.4	Monday.....	12 8:28
Tuesday.....	1 3:12	8 9:28	9.9	Tuesday.....	1 9:05	2 4 9:52	-0.1	Tuesday.....	1 9:05
Wednesday.....	2 4:05	8 9:40	8.4	Wednesday.....	2 9:50	3 10:40	0.2	Wednesday.....	2 9:50
Thursday.....	3 5:04	6 5:42	7.9	Thursday.....	3 10:41	4 0 11:34	0.6	Thursday.....	3 10:41
Friday.....	4 6:12	6 5:23	7.3	Friday.....	4 11:40	4.....	.....	Friday.....	4 11:40
Saturday.....	5 7:23	6 5:31	7.0	Saturday.....	5 0:35	0 9:10	0.5	Saturday.....	5 0:35
SUNDAY.....	6 8:30	6 5:47	6.7	SUNDAY.....	6 1:37	1 2 9:27	3.9	SUNDAY.....	6 1:37
Monday.....	7 9:37	6 5:57	6.7	Monday.....	7 2:38	1 2 9:35	3.4	Monday.....	7 2:38
Tuesday.....	8 10:42	7 2 9:55	6.9	Tuesday.....	8 3:32	1 4 9:27	2.8	Tuesday.....	8 3:32
Wednesday.....	9 11:40	7 10:45	7.2	Wednesday.....	9 4:18	2 10:01	2.1	Wednesday.....	9 4:18
Thursday.....	10 11:15	8 0:11	7.0	Thursday.....	10 4:58	1 5 5:39	1.6	Thursday.....	10 4:58
Friday.....	11 11:45	8.....	.....	Friday.....	11 5:35	2 5 6:12	1.0	Friday.....	11 5:35
Saturday.....	12 0:10	7 8:12	6.8	Saturday.....	12 6:13	1 6 6:47	0.5	Saturday.....	12 6:13
SUNDAY.....	1 0:49	7 8:12	6.8	SUNDAY.....	1 6:49	1 7 7:20	0.1	SUNDAY.....	1 6:49
Monday.....	2 1:30	7 7 1:15	6.9	Monday.....	2 7:20	2 7 7:54	-0.1	Monday.....	2 7:20
Tuesday.....	3 2:12	7 1 1:24	6.8	Tuesday.....	3 7:58	2 8 8:32	-0.3	Tuesday.....	3 7:58
Wednesday.....	4 3:02	6 58 3:04	6.6	Wednesday.....	4 8:30	2 9 9:14	-0.8	Wednesday.....	4 8:30
Thursday.....	5 4:35	6 58 3:52	6.4	Thursday.....	5 9:12	2 10 0:01	-0.1	Thursday.....	5 9:12
Friday.....	6 5:38	6 4 4:50	7.0	Friday.....	6 10:03	3 10:58	0.1	Friday.....	6 10:03
Saturday.....	7 6:38	6 4 4:50	7.0	Saturday.....	7 11:10	3 11:57	0.5	Saturday.....	7 11:10

STOCKS 28 75-85 50-55

He compared the strip with the one he had found the day previous. The only possible clue was a repetition of the group of characters "59546." The combinations were apparently without rhyme or reason, and he was completely baffled.

It took some time before he could bring himself to decisive action, yet the following day he expected to draw into his control the outstanding product which meant his success or failure at cornering the orange market. He knew he must act immediately if at all.

When the girl returned he decided to make the first test. "I noticed this little slip of paper blow on to the floor after you left, Alice," he observed, striving to speak kindly and without emotion. "Is it anything that you care about?"

He watched her carefully and saw the color mount to her cheeks.

"No—no—it is nothing," she stammered in confusion. "I was just cleaning up the machine a little and wanted to see if those characters were clear."

She attempted to speak quietly, but her eyes did not seek his with their usual directness.

His heart sank at her perfdy. The type was the same as that on her machine, but he knew that Fred and not Miss Cresswell had written them, undoubtedly on the same kind of type-



THE GIRL STUDIED IT INTENTLY.

writer in some other office. What office? Was there a similar typewriter in the law school?

A hundred questions came into his mind, but he decided first of all to consult a cipher expert and see if the riddle could be solved that way. Gathering the strips of paper together, he went up to an office in the same building where he knew a man named Farquhar, who was up on such things.

Farquhar greeted him cordially. He knew there was something important on hand when he received a visit from Hiram Judson.

"I have a little problem here for you to unravel," said Judson, speaking firmly. Farquhar could see that he was greatly wrought up.

"What make of typewriter is this?" was Farquhar's first question, examining the strips.

Judson told him he believed it was exactly similar to the one in his office.

"I can tell you one thing about this cipher immediately," said Farquhar incisively. "It is either a very easy one or a very shrewd one. I could perhaps tell immediately if I saw the machine on which it was written or one exactly like it. Is your office vacant at the present time?"

Judson nodded.

"Well, let us go down there now, and I will take a look at it."

They went out to the elevator to descend, and Judson mopped his forehead with his handkerchief. After all, he asked himself, did he want to know what the characters all meant? He had half a mind to write Farquhar a check for \$50 and tell him to leave the job alone.

But Farquhar bustled actively into the office ahead of him, where the janitor was engaged in sweeping.

"Let this go tonight, John," said Judson. He closed the door after the janitor.

Farquhar looked at the machine carefully.

"You might as well watch this little experiment," he said. "If it succeeds



"NO—NO—IT IS NOTHING."

it will save me a trip to the sales office to see other machines."

Judson sank on a chair helplessly. He could not remember when he had been so nervous in years.

"You observe," said the expert, "that this typewriter has two shift keys. One gives you all capital letters and the other when pressed down in place gives you all figures and characters. It is apparent that in writing these strips of paper the character key was pressed down. It is possible that the characters stand for the letters that would appear if the other shift had been used. We will see."

Judson, in a daze, saw him pick up the strip which he had tried to puzzle out the day before, bearing the following figures and characters:

28& 607 : = 59546 65 32@37

He held his breath as the experimenter progressed. Farquhar pressed down the capital shift key and fastened it in place. Then he began to strike the keys containing the figures and characters on the strip.

First he struck the figure 2 and obtained the corresponding capital V. Then he struck the figure 8 and got a capital L. Then he struck the two characters & and obtained two capital I's.

"Ah, I think we are on the right track!" he said quickly. Judson jumped nervously.

"You see the capital shift gives us

a word, according to my theory. The word is 'will.' When the other shift is down, it inscribes 28&6. Now we will go on further."

Judson watched in fear and trembling as the expert continued. When Farquhar had finished he handed the sheet of paper to Judson.

"Evidently the other strips will have



"WILL YOU LUNCH TODAY AT SWAN'S?" to be translated before the connection is obtained," he observed.

Judson read the sentence with blurred eyes:

"Will you lunch today at Swan's?" Then his senses awoke.

"Give me another," he asked, holding out a nervous hand.

Farquhar had already tapped it off: "Suppose we try Fuller's today!"

A great light broke in upon Judson. "Yes, I understand," he almost shouted. "I see the whole thing now."

His face was fairly illumined.

"Must be good news," said Farquhar, noting the marked change.

Judson did not reply, but turned around to his desk and scratched off a check for \$50.

"Don't translate any more," he ordered, handing the check over to Farquhar. "Just show me how that blasted thing works, and I'll find out for myself what the young rascal's been up to."

Farquhar was completely in the dark, but he made the required explanations and left the office with Judson punching at the typewriter with his big, heavy fingers.

As he progressed Judson's enthusiasm grew. He became more animated as each strip was translated and occasionally burst out into almost boyish laughter. When he had finished he had made out the following sentences at the end of about an hour's hard work picking on the typewriter:

"Must keep dad in the dark awhile longer."

"Wait till the deal in oranges is over with."

"Will meet you at the doorway this noon."

"Am sure he doesn't suspect us, sweetheart."

"Will be my own boss when I get into law practice."

Hiram Judson was somewhat of an old fashioned man, and his heart was what is commonly known as "in the right place." He sat quietly in his chair for some time, occasionally wiping his eyeglasses—frequently, in fact. He thought over his lifelong acquaintance with Jim Cresswell, Alice's father. They were men of the same



HE BURST INTO ALMOST BOYISH LAUGHTER.

stamp, and he knew the girl was worthy of any young man, although penniless. He crumpled the strips of paper in his hand, and his throat grew dry as he thought of his distrust.

"Blast these modern business stories!" he ejaculated, rising from his chair.

The next day Hiram Judson was the big man of the street, for he had succeeded in cornering the orange market. Strangers had his name upon their lips, and friends showered compliments upon him, but the greatest pleasure of all to him was a quiet little surprise of his own.

He absented himself from the office at a time when he knew Fred would be there and, summoning a messenger boy, sent up a little package he had carefully arranged.

It was addressed to Alice, and, with Fred bending over her shoulder, she opened it. The package contained flowers, and accompanying them was a slip bearing the following inscription:

043@43 @7305 70: *4@57&@589 \$49.

They looked at the inscription in amazement.

"Somebody has discovered our cipher!" cried Fred. They looked at each other in confusion, and then young Judson fell to work on the typewriter. The translation was quickly made:

"Please accept congratulations from dad."

Both colored violently, and then Fred put his arms proudly around the girl and kissed her fervently.

"Oh, Fred, do you understand?" whispered the girl, drawing the hair



"OH, FRED, DO YOU UNDERSTAND?"

crushed flowers up till their odor was penetrating.

"Yes," answered Judson, holding her closely. "Yes, Alice, I know."

For the flowers which good, old fashioned Hiram Judson had sent were orange blossoms.

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