The Main Chance

BY

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CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

Saxton was walking beside Raridan in the lower hall. He felt an impulse to express gratitude for his rescue from the loneliness of the twilight; but Raridan, talking incessantly, and with hands thrust easily into his trousers' pockets, led the way into the reading room.

"Hello, Wheaton, I ddn't know you were at home," he called to a man who sat reading a newspaper, and who now rose on seeing a stranger with Raridan. "This is Mr. Saxton, Mr. Wheaton."

"Oh, yes," said the man introduced as Wheaton. "I wondered whether I shouldn't see you here. Mr. Porter told me you had come."

Wheaton seemed very serious, and had not much to say. He had just come home from a terious trip to the western part of the State, he said, on an errand for his bank. He was tall, slim and dark. There was a suggestion of sleepy indifference in his black eyes, though he had a well-established reputation for energy and industry.

"Mr. Porter told me you were quartered here. I hope they can make you comfortable. I'm personally relieved that you have come. Your Boston friends were getting very impattent with us. We shall do all in our power to aid you; but of course Mr. Porter has said all that to you." His smile was by a movement of the lips, and his eyes did not seem to participate in it. He did not refer again to possible business relations with Saxton, but turned the conversation into general channels. They sat together for an hour, Raridan, as was his way in any company, doing most of the talking. They seemed to have the club house to themselves. Now and then one of the negro servants came and looked in upon them sleepily. A clerk at the desk in the hall read in peace. A party of young people could be heard entering by the side door set apart for women; and muffled echoes of their gaiety reached the trio in the reading room.

"That's back in the incurables' ward," said Raridan, in explanation to Saxton.

"It isn't nice of you to speak of the gentler sex in that way," admonished Wheaton.

"Oh, there are girls and girls," said Raridan, wearily. "It does seem to me that Mabel Margrave is always hungry. Why can't she do her eating at home?"

"He's simply jealous," Wheaton remarked to Saxton. "He always acts that way when he hears a girl in the ladies' dining room, and doesn't dare go back and break in on some other fellow's party."

"When you show signs of mental decay, it's time for us to go home, Wheaton." Raridan held out his hand to Saxton. "I'm glad you're here, and you may be sure we'll try to make you like us. Wheaton and I live in a barracks around the corner, with a few other homeless wanderers. I hope to see you there. Don't be afraid of the Chinaman at the door. My cell is up one flight and to the right."

"And don't overlook me there," Wheaton interposed. "I suppose we shall see you down town very often. Mr. Raridan is the only man in Clarkson who has no visible means of support. The rest of us are pretty busy; but that doesn't mean that we shan't be glad to see you at the Clarkson National."

CHAPTER III.

William Porter lived well, as became a first citizen of Clarkson. His house stood at the summit of a hill near the end of Varney street, and the gradual slope leaping up to it was a pretty park, whose lawn and shrubbery showed the intelligent care of a good gardener. The dry air was still hot as John Saxton climbed the cement walk which wound over the slope at the proper degree to bring the greatest comfort to pedestrians. The green of the lawn was grateful to Saxton's eyes, which dwelt with relief on the fine spray of the rotary sprinklers that hissed coolly at the end of long lines of hose. Interspersed among the indigenous scrub-oaks were elms, maples and cedars, and the mottled bark of white birches showed here and there. The lawn was broken by beds of cannas, and it was evident that the owner of the place had a taste for landscape gardening and spent his money generously in cultivating it. The house itself was of red brick dating from those years in which a Mansard roof and a tower were thought indispensable in serious domestic architecture. There was a broad veranda on the river side, accessible through French windows of the same architectural period.

A maid admitted Saxton and left him to find his own way into the drawing-room, through which a breeze was blowing pleasantly from across the valley. Saxton sat in a deep wicker chair, mopping his forehead. He heard a light step crossing the hall, and a girl, still singing softly to herself, passed back of him to a little stand which stood by one of the drawing room windows. The back of the wicker chair hid him; she was wholly unconscious that any one was there. The breath of the sweet peas which she was distributing suddenly sweetened the cool air of the room. Seeing that the girl did not know of his presence in the house, and that she would certainly discover him when she turned to go, he rose and faced her.

"I beg your pardon!"

"Oh!" The sweet peas fell to the floor, and the girl looked anxiously toward the hall door.

"I beg your pardon," Saxton repeated. "I think—I fear—I wasn't announced. But I believe Mr. Porter is expecting me."

"Yes?" The girl looked at John for the first time. He was taking the situation seriously, and was sincerely sorry for having startled her. "Father will be here very soon, I think." She moved toward the door with dignity, ignoring the fallen flowers, and Saxton stepped forward and picked them up.

"Allow me." The girl took them from him, a little uncertainly and guardedly, then returned to the vase and placed the flowers in it.

"Thank you very much,' she said. "I think I hear mf father now." She went to the outer door and opened, inclining her head slightly as she passed John, who also heard Mr. Porter's voice outside. He was remonstrating with the gardener about the position of the sprinklers, which he wished reset in keeping with ideas of his own.

"Well, Evelyn?" he said, as he came up the steps. Saxton could hear the young woman making an explanation in low tones to her father. Mr. Porter stood suddenly in the door.

"Well, this beats me," he began, effusively, coming forward and wringing Saxton's hand. "I'm not goilng to try to explain. I simply forgot, that's all." He took Saxton's arm and turned him toward the door where the girl still stood, smiling.

"Evelyn, this is Mr. Saxton. He's come to dine with us, but I forgot all about it. See here, Evelyn, you've got to square this for me," he concluded, and she came forward and shook hands with Saxton.

"I don't know how it can be 'squared.' This is only one of father's lapses, Mr. Saxton. You may be sure he didn't mean to do it."

"No, indeed," declared Porter, "but I'm ashamed of myself." He waved the young people to seats and vanished into the hall.

Porter returned and launched into sta-

THE GIRL PASSED TO A LITTLE STAND.

tistics as to the number of trees that had been planted in the State by school children during the past year. The maid came to announce dinner, and Porter talked on as he led the way to the dining room. As they were taking their seats a boy of 12 took the place opposite Saxton.

"This is my brother Grant," said Miss Porter. The boy was shy and silent and looked frail. The efforts of his sister to bring him into the talk were fruitless. When his father or sister spoke to him it was with an accented kindness. He would not talk before a stranger, but his face brightened at the humor of the others.

"You'd better get Mr. Saxton to tell you how much fun ranching is," said Porter, turning to the boy, who at once became interested in Saxton.

"I'm going to be a ranchman," the lad declared. "Father's going to buy me the Poindexter ranch some day."

"That's one of Mr. Saxton's properties. Maybe he'd trade it to you for a tin whistle."

"Is it as bad as that?" asked Saxton.

"Just wait until you see it. It's pretty bad."

"The house must have been charming," said Miss Porter.

"And that's about all it was," replied her father.

It was warmer outside than in, but Porter pretended that it was pleasanter out of doors, and insisted that there was always a breeze on the hill at night. Raridan appeared at the step presently. They all rose as he came up, and he said to Saxton as he shook hands with him: "I see you've found the way to headquarters. All roads lead up to this Alpine height—and I fear—I fear—that all roads lead down again," he added, with a doleful sigh, and laughed. He began making himself greatly at home. He assured Mr. Porter, with amiable insolence, that his veranda chairs were the most uncomfortable ones he knew, and went to fetch himself a better seat from the hall.

"Mr. Raridan likes to be comfortable," said Miss Porter in his absence.

"But he finds pleasure in making others comfortable, too," Saxton ventured.

"Oh, he's the very kindest of men," Miss Porter affirmed.

"What a nuisance you are, Warry," said Porter, as the young man fussed about to find a place for his chair. "We were all very easy here till you came. Even the breeze has died out."

Saxton got up to go presently and Raridon rose with him. He and Saxton went down the walk together.

"They seem to have struck up an acquaintance," observed Mr. Porter.

"Mr. Saxton is very nice," said Evelyn.

"Oh, he's all right," said her father, easily.

CHAPTER IV.

John Saxton trotted his pony through a broken gate into a great yard that had once been sown in blue grass, and at the center of which lay the crumbled ruins of a fountain. Before he could make his presence known, a frowsy man in corduroy emerged from the great front door and came toward him.

"My name's Saxton, and you must be Snyder."

"Correct," said the man, and they shook hands. "Walk in and help yourself." He led the pony toward the outbuildings, while Saxton viewed the pile before him with interest. He had been making a careful inspection of all the properties that had fallen to his care. This had necessitated a good deal of traveling. He had begun in Colorado and worked eastward, going slowly, and getting the best advice obtainable as to the value of his principals' holdings. Much of their property was practically worthless. Title had been gained under foreclosure to vast areas which had no value. A waterworks plant stood in the prairie where there had once been a Kansas town. The place was depopulated and the smokestack stood as a monument to blighted hopes. Ranch houses were inhabited by squatters, who had not been on his books at all, and who paid no tribute to Boston. He was viewed with suspicion by these tenants, and on inquiry at the county seats, he found that they were lawless men, and that it would be better for him to let them alone. It was patent that they would not pay rent, and to eject them merely in the maintenance of a principle involved useless expense and violence.

"This certainly beats them all," Saxton muttered aloud.

He had reached in his itinerary what his papers called the Poindexter property. He had found that the place was famous throughout this part of the country for the idiosynchasies of its sometime owners, three young men who had come out of the East to show how the cattle business should be managed. They had secured an immense acreage and built a stone ranch house whose curious architecture imparted to the Platte Valley a touch of medievalism that was little appreciated by the neighboring cattlemen. One of the owners, a Philadelphian named Poindexter, who had a weakness for architecture, contributed the buildings and his two associates bought the cattle. There were one thousand acres of rolling pasture here, much of it lying along the river, and a practical man could hardly have failed to succeed; but theft, disease in the herd and inexperience in buying and selling, had wrought the ranchmen's destruction. Before their money was exhausted, Poindexter and his associates lived in considerable state, and entertained the friends who came to see them according to the best usages of Eastern country life within, and their own mild approximation of Western life without. Tom Poindexter's preceptor in architecture, an elderly gentleman with a sense of humor, had found a pleasure which he hardly dared to express in the medieval tone of the house and buildings.

"There's a remnant of the Poindexter herd out there somewhere," Wheaton had said to Sexton. "The fellow Snyder, that I put in as a caretaker, ought to have gathered up the loose cattle by this time; that's what I told him to do when I put him there."

Saxton turned and looked out over the rolling plain. A few rods away lay the river, and where it curved nearest the house stood a group of cottonwoods, like sentinels drawn together for colloquy. Scattered here and there over the plain were straggling herds.

There was much in the place to appeal to Saxton's quiet humor. The house was two stories high and there was a great hall, with an immense fireplace at one end. The sleeping rooms opened on a gallery above the hall. An effort had been made to give the house the appearance of Western wildness by introducing a great abundance of skins of wild beasts—a highly dishonest bit of decorating, for they had been bought in Chicago. Under one wing of the stairway, which divided to left and right at the center of the hall, was the dining room; under the other was the ranch office.

"Those fellows thought a good deal of their stomachs," said Snyder, as Saxton opened and shut the empty drawers of the sideboard.

"I suppose our mortgage covers the sunset, too," Saxton said. Nearly every portable thing of value had been removed, and evidently in haste; but the heavy oak chairs and the table remained. Snyder did his own modest cooking in the kitchen, which was in great disorder. The floor of the office was littered with scraps of paper. The original tenants had evidently made a quick settlement of their business affairs before leaving. Snyder did his own modest cooking in the on the long bench that was built into one side of the room, and a battered valise otherwise marked it as his lodging place. Saxton viewed the room with disgust; it was more like a kennel than a bedroom.

"My ranching wasn't so bad after all," he muttered. "If you have a pony we'll take a ride around the fences."

(To be continued.)

No More "White Bread?"

"White bread is abolished in the United States," it is stated in telegraphic dispatches, referring to the ruling of the Secretary of Agriculture that millers must not bleach flour. The ruling went into effect this week, but millers have until June 3 to dispose of the bleached flour still in stock. It is declared that there will be as much difference between bread made from unbleached flour as there is between angel cake and sponge cake. The flour will be of a creamy color instead of white, and the bread will be light golden in color. But there will be no difference in flavor, and the bread will have an additional quality to commend itself to the consumer, because it will be just like that "mother used to make," in the good old days before the craze for bleached flour came into vogue.—Rochester Democrat.

Unquestionably.

"Don't you think this dealing in futures is awful?" asked the young woman who would like to reform the world.

"I don't know much about it," confessed the woman with suspiciously blonde hair, "but I'm sure it must be much nicer than dealing in pasts."—Kansas City Times.

Wise.

"I accepted him because he's so sensible and practical."

"How did you find it out?"

"He waited till after Christmas to propose."—Cleveland Leader.

To every revolution of its driving wheels a locomotive gives four puffs. Driving wheels average about twenty feet in circumference.

FARMS AND FARMERS

Water for the Bees.

Give the bees plenty of water. They need a great deal and will fly a long distance to get it.

If there is no running stream or lake of pure water near it is well to place a pail of fresh water near the apairy every day.

Bees use water to dilute the heavy, thick honey left over from winter to make it suitable for the young larvae and also to make the cell wax pliable.

Bees should be protected from the wind on the north and west by a closeset hedge or high fence.

All the weeds should be kept down in front of the hives. Mow a plot 6 feet wide and then cut the weeds and grass close to the ground with a hoe.

An hour once a week spent on the care of the bees will bring larger returns for the effort than any other labor on the farm.

A newspaper man in Chicago, who lives a few miles out in the country, last year sold $225 worth of honey to three big hotels. He says he did not spend more than an hour a week looking after his bees during the season.—F. and D. Journal.

Feed for Chicks.

Feed chickens the first day or two upon a mixture of bread crumbs grated fine and hard-boiled egg chopped fine. Keep water before them in a small fountain, so they can drink but not get into it. In a few days feed upon rolled oats, finely cracked corn and any small seeds. Add a little beef scraps to the food. In the course of two weeks whole wheat can be given. This is the dry method of feeding, which is coming into vogue quite extensively. Here is another method of feeding: Mix dry two parts of corn meal, one part of finely ground wheat bran and one part of beef scraps. After they are thoroughly mixed add boiling water in sufficient quantity to make a stiff dough. Cover the vessel and let it cook. Feed the dough warm or cold, but never hot.—Denver Field and Farm.

Raising Pigs.

The cheapest way to put gains on young pigs is through the sow. She has a strong digestion and can turn coarse grains and pasture into easily digested milk. Careful experiments show that a pound of weight taken from the sow will make more than 1 pound of gain on the pigs, the flesh of the young animals containing more water. The sow should be fed to produce a high milk yield, and the pigs should be kept with her until they get to eating a full feed of grain and pasture.

Morgan Horses.

Forty years ago the Morgans were the favorite road horses. This strain traces to a single ancestor, Justin Morgan, foaled in Vermont in 1793, his blood being largely thoroughbred. From him descended the Blackhawk, Bashaw, Golddust, Ethan Allen, Ben Franklin and Gen. Knox and Daniel Lambert families. The Morgan type is short of leg, thick and round barrel, intelligent and of great courage and endurance.

Methods of Cultivation Compared.

The farmers of the North Atlantic states during the last census year each produced about $984 worth of farm crops, while the average South Atlantic states farmer made only $484, though the Southern farmer averaged 108 acres per farm and the Northern farmer only 96 acres.

Alfalfa Planting.

It should not be forgotten that the spring is the proper time to prepare the alfalfa crop that is to be planted next fall. The ground which is expected to be used for this crop should not be planted to small grain; neither should corn precede alfalfa, because the ground will not be kept free of weeds and grass. The best preparatory crop for alfalfa is cow peas; then after the vines are removed or plowed under the ground should be well broken and kept clean of weeds and grass by surface cultivation until it is seeded in alfalfa the following fall. Peanuts may be grown instead of cow peas, if the crop is considered more desirable, as it is perhaps, but they must be kept well cultivated and especially allow no earth grass to grow in the crop.—Chicago Inter Ocean.

Value of a Small Stream.

An interesting example of the value of a small stream for light and power purposes may be found near Sacramento, Cal. A trout stream has been damned up and the power in the form of electricity has been used for doing such light work as washing and ironing, also for cooking and lighting in the home of the owner. As the stream is very small during the dry months, an old miner's ditch has been dammed to form a reservoir of 100,000 cubic feet capacity. The plant cost $1,500 and in a single year has done $700 worth of work.

Portable Canning Machine.

A machine by which the farmer can prepare and can his fruits, tomatoes, corn, beans, or any other farm produce which can be canned, in the fields or orchards in which the vegetable or fruit is growing, is described in Popular Mechanics. Mounted on a wheelbarrow arrangement, the machine can be pushed from one orchard to another or from a tomato patch to a cornfield as necessity requires. Water for the process is heated by a kerosene burner.

Handling Geese.

In handling geese they should always be taken by the neck, and when lifted from the ground the body should be turned with the back toward the person handling it. In that position it cannot strike, and will remain quiet and docile. The body can be partly supported by seizing the first joint of the wing with one hand. If the goose is held facing one, it will strike hard blows with its wings or scratch with its feet.

Work Hours of Farmers.

Prof. Boss of the Minnesota Agricultural College, says that statistics of the actual hours of labor on the nine hours a day in summer and between four and five in winter. Prof. Bailey of the Farm Life Commission tells the story of the schoolma'am working from 9 to 4 until she married a farmer, and had to work from 4 to 9. Moral, schoolma'ams make good wives for farmers.—Oberlin Times.

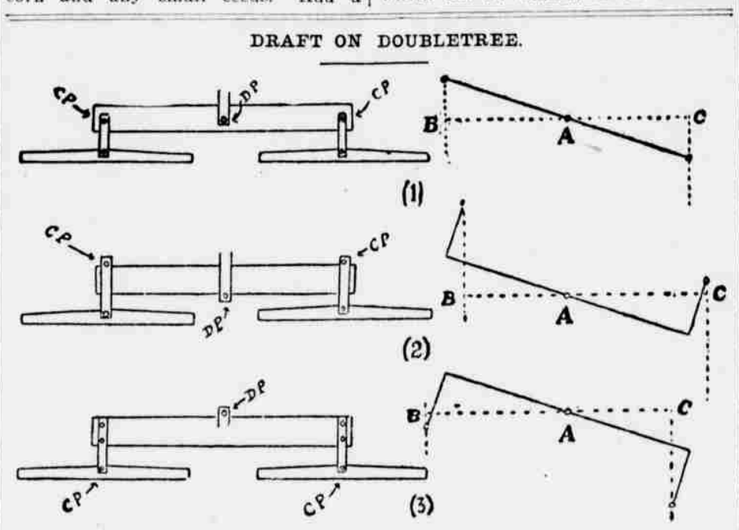
Transplanting.

In transplanting any vegetable plants let it be done in the evening, if possible. Press the soil firmly about the roots and water well. If, after the water disappears, dry earth is covered over the wet, it will prevent baking of the soil about the roots when the sun comes out next day.

Value of Quality.

Extra large specimens of vegetables are all right for exhibition purposes and to win prizes with, but they are not what the average consumer wants and is willing to pay freight on. Quality, uniformity of size and smoothness are what the average man wants.

DRAFT ON DOUBLETREE.



There is a difference of opinion regarding the pulling ability of each horse in a team. Some are of the opinion that the horse ahead is pulling the most, and vice versa.

The draft on each horse depends entirely on the relative lengths of the lever arms, and the lengths of the lever arms depend on the position of the clevis pins with respect to the draw pin. In upper diagram (1) the clevis pins and the draw pin are in a straight line, hence the lever arm is the perpendicular distance from the draw pin (A) to the line of draft of each horse. The lever arms in this case are A. B. and A. C., which are equal, no matter how much one horse is ahead of the other. One horse always pulls the same amount as the other.

In diagram (2) the clevis pins are behind the draw pin, and when one horse pulls ahead of the other his lever arm (A. C.) becomes longer and (A. B.) the lever arm of the one behind becomes shorter. In this case the horse ahead, having a large lever arm, has the advantage and pulls less than the one behind.

In diagram (3) the clevis pins are ahead of the draw pin, and when one horse pulls ahead his lever arm shortens and the lever arm of the one behind lengthens. The horse ahead, having the lever arm shorter, pulls more than the horse behind.

TRUMPET CALLS.

Ram's Horn Sounds a Warning Note to the Unredeemed.

To do as Christ did we must love as He did.

Once get a man right in his heart and his feet will will not go far wrong.

Above the blackest cloud there is plenty of light.

God never changes His mind.

What men often call excuses God calls lies.

Faith without works is like a watch without hands.

Truth never stops chasing a lie around the world.

Give the Lord a chance and He will will give you a chance.

Our needs can never be greater than God's promises for their supply.

The man who delays to do the right thing is not likely to ever do it.

The preacher should not forget that the devil always goes to church.

Not what we can do but what we can bear is the real test of character.

If there is a time when God is especially close to us it is when we are in trouble.

Following Christ ought to consist in something more than wearing a red button and going to church in pleasant weather.

The man who looks toward the well-watered plains of Sodom with a longing eye will soon be wearing out shoe leather in trying to get to them.

A MISTAKEN PURPOSE.

"Yes, dogs may be all right,' reluctantly admitted the nervous man, "but somehow I always was scared of 'em, and they all seem to realize the fact. This business of conquering a dog by looking him straight in the eye doesn't always work out the right way. I never cared to test the matter myself, but I knew one fellow who did. He lost part of his coat tail. And there is a foolish saying that barking dogs won't bite. Another fallacy. I once knew an old shepherd-dog that would bark and bite at the same time. I still carry a scar on my shin as a proof.

"I was farming at the time, out in Kansas, and the dog belonged on the next farm. The old fellow who owned him said he wouldn't bite. We had just moved down from the city, you know, and it was necessary for me to call at the old farmer's house for milk.

"At first Shep wouldn't allow me to enter the gate. Shep was the dog's name. I tried all sorts of inducements—called him by name in the friendliest tone at my command, or threatened him with imaginary stones. Finally the old farmer would relieve the situation by escorting me into the yard, with Shep sneaking along about two inches in the rear of my legs. Very comfortable.

"But as time went on I became better acquainted with the shepherd dog, and as long as I wore overalls and toted my milk pail, he permitted me to enter the front gate without challenge. On these occasions he assumed a benevolent air, as if he was really granting me a large favor. It was a favor.

"But one time I called on the old farmer on a matter of business, and had discarded the overalls and milk pail. As I entered the gate I saw a book agent marching boldly up the yard. The poor fool didn't know about Shep, and he failed to see the dog as he came tearing up the lane.

"'Hey, there!' I shouted, in a warning voice. 'Climb that tree quick or that dog will chew you up!'

"But the poor chap didn't have time to budge, for Shep was traveling like a Kansas tornado. I shut my eyes for a moment, from sheer pity, and then opened them again to view the tragedy. That dog had passed the book agent entirely, and was still coming. He was after me."

His Postscript.

It was Saturday, and Mrs. Cushman, having arrayed Bobby in his Sunday best, was endeavoring to keep him occupied while she dressed hurriedly, pending a visit to the photographer. "Write mother a letter on your celluloid tablets," she coaxed.

Bobby looked out of the window and across the street for inspiration—and found it. His fingers moved briskly, and in less than three minutes he was displaying his letter and pressing it upon his mother attention.

"'Dear mother,' she read. 'The boys across the street in the Lothrop's yard are playing a new game. I should like to see it. May I go?

"'Your affecshonate son, Bob.'

"That is rather short, Bobby," she said, still coaxing him, with a glance at the clock. "You go back to your room and write mother a little postscript."

Bobby departed joyously, but when the last refractory hook had yielded and his mother, drawing on her gloves, hurried to his room, it was empty.

On Bobby's desk lay the letter, with the desired addition:

"P. S. I have went. Bob."

Men have their troubles the same as women, but they have less to say about them.

There are as many sides to a story as there are people who tell it.