

The Main Chance

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CHAPTER XXII.

There was much to do, and John Saxton had been back and forth twice between the ranch house and the village before the sun had crept high into the heavens. The little village had been slow to grasp the fact of the tragedy at its doors which had already carried its name afar. There was much to do and yet it was so pitifully little after all! Warry Raridan was dead, and eager men were scouring the country for his murderer; but John Saxton sat in the room where Warry had died. It seemed to John that the end had come of all the world. He sharpened his grief with self-reproach that he had been a party to an exploit so foolhardy; they should never have attempted a midnight descent upon an unknown foe; and yet it was Raridan's own plan.

Saxton had ministered to the boy Grant with characteristic kindness. Grant knew now of Warry's death, and this, with his own sharp experiences, had unerved him. He clung to Saxton, and John soothed him until he slept, in one of the upper chambers.

Wheaton stood suddenly in the door, and beckoned to Saxton, who went out to him. They had exchanged no words since that moment when the old bishop's prayer had stilled the room where Warry Raridan died. Through the events of the morning hours, Wheaton had been merely a spectator of what was done—Saxton had hardly noticed him, and glancing at Wheaton now, he was shocked at the look of great age that had come upon him.

"I want to speak to you a minute—you and Bishop Delafield," said Wheaton. The bishop was pacing up and down in the outer hall, which had been quietly closed and put in order by men from the village. Wheaton led the way to the room once used as the ranch office.

"Will you sit down, gentlemen?" He spoke with so much calmness that the others looked at him curiously. The bishop and Saxton remained standing, and Wheaton repeated, sharply, "Will you sit down?" The two men sat down side by side on the leather-covered bench that ran around the room, and Wheaton stood up before them.

"I have something to say to you, before you—before we go," he said. Their silence seemed to confuse him for a moment, but he regained his composure. He looked from Saxton to the bishop, who nodded, and he went on:

"The man who killed Warry Raridan was my brother," he said, and waited. Saxton started slightly; his numbed senses quickened under Wheaton's words, and in a flash he saw the explanation of many things.

"He was my brother," Wheaton went on quietly. "He had wanted money from me. I had refused to help him. He carried away Grant Porter thinking to injure me in that way. It was that, I think, as much as the hope of getting a large sum for the boy's return."

A great quiet lay upon the house; the two men remained sitting, and Wheaton stood before them with his arms crossed, the bishop and Saxton watching him, and Wheaton looking from one to the other of his companions. Contempt and anger were rising in John Saxton's heart; but the old bishop waited calmly; this was not the first time that a troubled soul had opened its door to him.

"Go on," he said, kindly. "My brother and I ran away from the little Ohio town where we were born. Our father was a harness maker. I hated the place. I think I hated my father and mother." He paused, as he did sometimes when he had suddenly spoken a thought which he had long carried in our heart but have never uttered. The words had elements of surprise for James Wheaton, and he waited, weighing his words and wishing to deal justly with himself. "My brother was a bad boy; he had never gone to school, as I had; he had several times been guilty of petty stealing. I joined him once in a theft; we were arrested, but he took the blame and was punished, and I went free. I am not sure that I was any better, or that I am now any better than he is. But that is the only time I ever stole."

Saxton remembered that Warry had once said of James Wheaton that he would not steal. "I wanted to be honest; I tried my best to do right. I never expected to do as well as I have—I mean in business and things like that. Then after all the years in which I had not seen anything of my brother he came into the bank one day as a tramp, begging, and recognized me. At first I helped him. I sent him here; you will remember the man Snyder you found here when you came," turning to Saxton. "I knew you would not keep him. There was nothing else that I could do for him. I had new ambitions," his voice fell and broke, "there were—there were other things that meant a great deal to me—I could not have him about. It was he who assaulted me one night at Mr. Porter's house two years ago, when you," he turned to the bishop, "came up and drove him away. After that I gave him money to leave the country and he promised to stay away; but he began blackmailing me again, and I thought then that I had done enough for him and refused to help him any more. When Grant Porter disappeared I knew at once what had happened. He had threatened—but there is something—something wrong with me!"

These last words broke from him like a cry, and he staggered suddenly and would have fallen if Saxton had not sprung up and caught him. He recovered quickly and sat down on the bench. "Let us drop this now," said Saxton, standing over him; "it's no time—"

"There's something wrong with me," said Wheaton, huskily, without heeding, and Saxton drew back from him. "I was a vain, cowardly fool. But I did the best I could," he passed his hand over his face, and his fingers crept nervously to his collar, "but it wasn't any use! It wasn't any use!" He turned again to the bishop. "I heard you preach a sermon once. It was about our opportunities. You said we must live in the open. I had never thought of that before," and he looked at the bishop with a foolish grin on his face. He stood up suddenly and extended his arms. "Now I want you to tell me what to do. I want to be punished! This man's blood is on my hands. I want to be punished!" And he sank to the floor in a heap, repeating, as if to himself, "I want to be punished!"

There are two great crises in the life of a man. One is that moment of disclosure when for the first time he recognizes some vital weakness in his own character. The other comes when, under stress, he submits this defect to the eyes of another. James Wheaton hardly knew when he had realized the first, but he was conscious now that he had passed the second. It had carried him like a high tide to a point of rest; but it was a point of helplessness, too.

"It isn't for us to punish you," the bishop began, "and I do not see that you have transgressed any law."

"That is it; that is it! It would be easier!" moaned Wheaton. John turned away. James Wheaton's face was not good to see.

"Yes, it would be easier," the bishop continued. "I can see that in going back to Clarkson many things will be hard for you."

"I can't! Oh, I can't!" He still crouched on the floor, with his arms extended along the bench.

"But that is the manly thing for you. If you have acted a cowardly part, now is the time for you to change, and you must change on the field of battle. I can imagine the discomfort of facing your old friends; that you will suffer great humiliation; that you may have to begin again; but you must do it, my friend, if you wish to rise above yourself, and you may depend upon my help."

The old man had spoken with emphasis, but with great gentleness. He turned to Saxton, wishing him to speak.

"The bishop is right. You must go back with us, Wheaton." But he did not say that he would help him. John Saxton neither forgot nor forgave easily. He did not see in this dark hour what he had to do with James Wheaton's affairs. But the Bishop of Clarkson went over to James Wheaton and lifted him up; it was as though he would make the physical act carry a spiritual aid with it.

"We can talk of this to better purpose when we get home," he said. "You are broken now and see your future darkly; but I say to you that you can be restored; there's light and hope ahead for you. If there is any meaning in my ministry it is that with the help of God a man may come out of darkness into the light again."

There was a moment's silence. Wheaton sat bent forward on the bench, with his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands.

"They are waiting for us," said Saxton. A special train was sent to Great River, and the little party waited for it on the station platform, surrounded by awed villagers, who stood silent in the presence of death and a mystery which they but dimly comprehended. Officers of the law from Clarkson came with the train and surrounded Bishop Delafield, Wheaton and Saxton as they stood with Grant Porter by the rude bier of Warry Raridan. The men answered many questions and the sheriff of the county took the detectives away with him. Margrave had sent his private car, and the returning party were huddled in one end of it, save John Saxton, who sat alone with the body of Warry Raridan. The train was to go back immediately, but it waited for the west-bound express which followed it and passed the special here. There was a moment's confusion as the special with its dark burden was switched into a siding to allow the regular train to pass. Then the special returned to the main track and began its homeward journey.

John sat with his arms folded, sunk into his great-coat, and watched the gray landscape through the snow that was falling fast. The events of the night seemed like a hideous dream. It was an inconceivable thing that within a few hours so dire a calamity could have fallen. The very nearness of the city to which they were bound added to the unreality of all that had happened. But there the dark burden lay; and the snow fell upon the gray earth and whitened it, as if to cleanse and remake it and blot out its color and dread. The others left Saxton alone; he was nearer than they; but late in the afternoon, as they approached the city, Captain Wheelock came in and touched him on the shoulder; Bishop Delafield wished to see him. John rose, giving Wheelock his place, and went back to where the old man sat staring out at the snow. He beckoned Saxton to sit down by him.

"Where's Wheaton?" the bishop asked. John looked at him and at the other men who sat in silence about the car. He went to one of them and repeated the bishop's question, but was told that Wheaton was not on the train. He had been at the station and had come aboard the car with the rest; but he must have returned to the station and been left. John remembered the passing of the west-bound express, and went back and told the bishop that Wheaton had not come with them. The old man shook his head and turned again to the window and the flying panorama of the snowy landscape. John sat by him, and neither spoke until the train's speed diminished at a crossing on the outskirts of Clarkson. Then suddenly, hot at heart and with tears of sorrow and rage in his eyes, Saxton said, so that only the bishop could hear:

"He's a coward!" The Bishop of Clarkson stared steadily out upon the snow with troubled eyes.

CHAPTER XXIII. Porter insisted that Margrave should not have the Traction Company at any price, though the general manager of the Transcontinental was persistent in his offers. As Margrave did not care to deal with Porter, who was not, he complained, "an easy trader," he negotiated with Fenton and Saxton. After several weeks of ineffectual effort he concluded that

Fenton and Saxton were almost as difficult. He called Saxton a "stubborn brute" to Saxton's face; but offered to continue him in a responsible position with the company if he would help him to control the company for political reasons, but there was also the fact of his having invested the money of several of his friends in the Transcontinental directorate, prior to the last annual meeting.

These gentlemen had begun to inquire in a respectful way when Margrave was going to effect the coup which, he had been assuring them, he had planned. They had, they were aware, no rights as against the bondholders; and as Margrave understood this perfectly well, he was very anxious to buy in the property at receiver's sale for an amount that would satisfy Porter and his allies, as he put it. This required additional money, but he was able to command it from his "people," for the receiver had demonstrated that the property could be made to pay. While these negotiations were pending, Saxton and Fenton were able to satisfy their curiosity as to the relations which had existed between Wheaton and Margrave. Margrave had no shame in confessing just what had passed between them; he viewed it all as a joke, and explained, without compunction, exactly the manner in which he had come by the shares which had belonged to Evelyn Porter and James Wheaton.

When Saxton came back from Colorado, Porter was ill again, and Fenton was seriously disposed to accept a price which Margrave's syndicate had offered. Margrave's position had grown uncomfortable; he had to get himself and "his people" out of a scrape at any cost. His plight pleased Fenton, who tried to make Porter see the irony of it; and this view of it, as much as the high offer, finally prevailed upon him. He saw at last the futility of securing and managing the property for himself; his health had become a matter of concern, and Fenton insisted that a street railway company would prove no easier to manage than a bank.

Porter was, as John had said, "a peculiar brick," and after the final orders of the court had been made, and Saxton's fees allowed, Porter sent him a check for five thousand dollars, without comment. Fenton made no objection, and he owed much to John; but John protested that he preferred being thanked to being tipped; but the lawyer persuaded him at last that the idiosyncrasies of the rich ought to be respected.

Porter felt his burdens slipping from him with unexpected satisfaction. He grew jaunty in his old way as he chided his contemporaries and friends for holding on; as for himself, he told them, he intended "to die rested," and he adjusted his affairs so that they would give him little trouble in the future. The cottage which he had bought on the North Shore was a place they had all admired the previous summer. Porter had liked it because there was enough ground to afford lawn and flower beds which he cultivated with so much satisfaction at home. The place was called "Red Gables," and Porter had bought it with its furniture, so that there was little to do in taking possession but to move in. The Whipples were their first guests, going to them in mid-July, when they were fully installed.

The elder Bostonians whom Porter had met the previous summer promptly renewed their acquaintance with him. He had attained, in their eyes, a new dignity in becoming a cottager. The previous owner of "Red Gables" had lately failed in business and they found in the advent of the Porters a sign of the replenishing of the East from the West, which interested them philosophically. Porter lacked of his own repose, but they liked to hear him talk. He was amusing and interesting, and they had already found his prophecies concerning the markets trustworthy. The ladies of their families heard with horror his views on the Indian question, which were not romantic, nor touched with the spirit of Boston philanthropy; but his daughter was lovely, they said, and her accent was wholly inoffensive.

So the Porters were well received, and Evelyn was glad to find her father accepting his new leisure so complacently. She and Mrs. Whipple agreed that he and the general were handsome and interesting as any of the elderly Bostonians among their neighbors; and they undoubtedly were so.

(To be continued.)

Repeat. Madame-Jules, we have been married six months, and you no longer love me.

Monsieur—My dear! I—

Madam—Oh, it's no use attempting to deny it. You should have married a stupider woman than I to make such a denial convincing.

Monsieur (a little huffy)—Well, it's not my fault. I couldn't find one.—Le Ritre.

She'd Mind Him. Hope was three years older than her baby brother, and felt herself equal to assuming the responsibilities of big sisterhood. When, therefore, her mother asked her to "keep an eye" on the baby and see that he didn't fall out of bed, Hope answered:

"Yes, mamma, I'll mind him; an' if he falls, I'll call you the minute he hits the floor."—Harper's Magazine.

The Trouble. The poet sat staring at the blank sheet of paper on the table before him.

"What is the matter, dear?" asked his sympathetic better half, as she passed her cool hand over his troubled brow. "What is on your mind?"

"Nothing," answered the poet, gloomily; "nothing, I assure you. That's the trouble."

Then He Got Busy. Him—What would happen if I were to attempt to kiss you? Her—It would scare me awfully. Him—And would you scream? Her—Oh, no. Fright always renders me speechless.

One Explanation. "I wonder what produces that tired feeling in spring?" "I guess it's thinking about the summer vacation."—Baltimore American.



Women and Poultry.

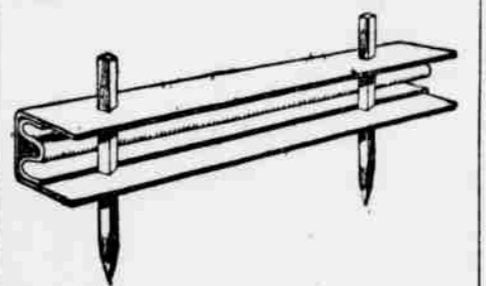
There is no field open to women today that is less crowded than the poultry field; none that offers as good returns for one's labor; none that affords so much freedom when taken as a vocation, and none that makes one so nearly independent of others. Some of our best planned poultry farms, as well as our best-paying ones, are the outgrowth of woman's skill and ingenuity in planning, and her financial ability in conducting the enterprise. Most women show a qualification for neatness about poultry of which men are occasionally void, and as cleanliness is an important factor, she often outstrips our "lords of creation" in results obtained. The care of poultry is productive of good health to women engaged therein, giving them sufficient exercise in the open air, and just enough care and responsibility to make their work interesting and to make them feel their importance. The field for women is almost unlimited, and it pays her better profits than she can reasonably expect from most other business ventures.—Commercial Poultry.

Destroying Water Hyacinth.

Spraying is the method followed at the present time by the government in destroying the water hyacinth, which has proved a serious impediment to navigation on many of the Southern rivers of this country. A great number of suggestions have been tried, and the fine spraying process has been found to be the most effectual and economical. Two government boats are engaged in the work. Each is equipped with tanks for the boiling of a mixture of white arsenic, sal soda and water. This is sprayed on the plants, and as the latter are about 98 per cent water there is very little residue after they will down under the action of the poisonous solution. That the solution kills the plants absolutely has been proved in every case where the conditions were such as to prevent the introduction of new plants within the area sprayed.

Harrow Tooth Fastener.

John A. Johnson, of Lancer, Wash., has patented a harrow tooth fastener, the object of which is to fasten harrow-teeth in U bar harrows without the use of clamps, bolts or



nuts, and consists of a square or diamond-shaped hole pressed through the U bar of the harrow for the reception of the teeth, and a W-shaped fastener pressed out of sheet metal inserted between the teeth and the back of the bar, with a corresponding round notch in the tooth to receive the fastener. Thus, one fastener holds all the teeth in the bar.

Cultivate the Orchard.

The young orchard should be cultivated, but not with grain or grass crops. Corn, potatoes, beans or other vegetables, well cultivated, are ideal for a young orchard. The ground should be stirred every two or three weeks until the middle of August. In going through the orchard with the harrow, care should be taken not to injure, bruise or "bark" the trees. To avoid this, the horses ought to be muzzled and the outside portions of traces and whiffletrees padded.

In going through some young orchards early in the season for the purpose of demonstrating pruning, Prof. Surface found many cases of trees which had been seriously damaged through being grazed by whiffletrees, or struck or bitten by the horses. In going through the orchard, rub off all unnecessary sprouts.—Rural World.

A Threshing Record.

George W. McKnight of Howell, Ky., in a run of twelve and one-half days, threshed 18,000 bushels of wheat, moved every day, sometimes as far as three miles, and never broke a belt or touched the cylinder. Mr. McKnight reports that the best yield he found was twenty-three acres for George Wood, that averaged twenty-five bushels. Of his own crop fifty acres averaged twenty-two bushels, and the whole crop of 100 acres averaged twenty bushels. All of the crops he threshed made from fifteen to twenty bushels an acre.

Food Value of Buttermilk.

Buttermilk is a nutritious and wholesome food, or drink, and it is relished by a great many people. There is a good sale for it in all towns and cities of any size. The quality of buttermilk, like all other foods, is determined by the way it is prepared. To secure the most wholesome product, keep the milk as pure and clean as possible, use the most pure water obtainable and practice absolutely clean methods in churning. It must be held at a low temperature in order to have it fresh for any great length of time.

Weight and Feed.

When one comes to figure on a difference in weight for the same age and feed of 200 to 400 pounds, and a difference in price of several cents, he can see as plainly as he can see anything that there is more money in improved stock. Suppose a 2-year-old scrub steer weighs 900 pounds and sells for 4 cents a pound, while a 2-year-old pure bred weighs 1,200 and sells for 6 1/2 cents, there will be \$36 for one and \$75 for the other. Is there any man in his right senses who can think it will not pay to keep well-bred stock when he compares these figures? They are not imaginary at all, but represent the quotations in the market reports during the last few months. The real question then, is, how to get better cattle. Bulls are cheap just now, and in fact have been selling lower than cows and heifers.—Denver Field and Farm.

Ants Destroy Scale Insects.

Prof. Harlan of California has discovered that the ordinary black ant will remove the scale from fruit trees without injuring the tree or leaves in the least. He says their work is more complete than that accomplished by spraying or by any of the imported insects. The ants are captured by placing a plate of sugar near an ant hill, and when covered with ants the plate is put in the forks of the infected tree. The ants leave the sugar and go to work on the scale. As soon as they all leave the sugar the plate is placed at the foot of the tree, and as the ants come down after having cleaned the tree of scale, they again assemble on the sugar and are thus easily removed to another tree.

Supply of Nitrate.

It is claimed that at the present rate of use the known supply of nitrate of soda will be exhausted in less than fifty years, while as a matter of fact the consumption is increasing steadily and rapidly. It is therefore safe to say that before twenty-five years have passed the supply will be low, unless new fields are discovered, and that the price will be high. Over a million and a half tons were used last year. This is not encouraging for the young generation of farmers, except for the fact that we will always have our clovers, our alfalfa, our cowpeas—the great legume family—and properly rotated these will supply the soil with nitrogen from the inexhaustible supply in the air.

A Butter Fraud.

An ingenious fraud in the butter line was brought to light recently in England. In that country the amount of moisture in butter is limited by law to 16 per cent. Australian and New Zealand butters, on the other hand, usually contain only 8 per cent of water. Taking advantage of this fact, several firms imported large quantities of these colonial butters, to which 8 per cent of water was then added, thus bringing them down to the British standard. As the added water naturally cost nothing and the product was sold at the current price, a substantial profit was made.

Slaughter of Robins.

Virginia, North Carolina and Tennessee have the undesirable distinction of being the only states in the Union where the slaughter of robins is permitted by law. Recent investigations show that not less than 9,000,000 robins are killed in these three states during the winter months. It is a fact that every robin earns \$1 in the destruction of insects injurious to crops every year. The hunters sell them at 5 cents apiece. This is a waste of millions of dollars and ought to appeal to the hard, common sense of every farmer. It ought to be stopped in every state.

American Plows Abroad.

American plows and cultivators are turning up the soil in more than seventy countries and colonies of the world. In Japan, in 1908, there were \$22,000 worth; in Asiatic Turkey, \$14,000; in New Zealand, \$50,000; in British South Africa, \$22,000; in Portuguese Africa, \$31,000; in Cuba, \$85,000; while Argentina took in 1908 \$780,000 worth; Canada, \$474,000; Russia, in Europe, \$259,000, and Asiatic Russia, \$750,000 worth.

Destroying Weeds.

In Denmark the farmers are compelled by law to destroy all weeds on their premises, and in France a farmer may prosecute his neighbor for damages if the neighbor allows weeds to go to seed. It would save millions of dollars in this country if laws prevailed which prevented farmers from growing weeds to seed on their own as well as others' farms.

Shorthorn Milk Cows.

Experiments in developing a milking strain of shorthorn cattle have been begun by the dairy division of the United States Department of Agriculture in co-operation with the Minnesota Experiment Station and with nine Minnesota breeders, the latter having agreed to allow their herds to be used and to manage them according to the instructions of the department.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

A dental college has recently been added to the University of Madrid.

Walter Broadbelt, of Williston, Pa., claims to have a hen that last year laid 247 eggs, of which ten were double-yolked.

Neither boiling water nor cold 200 degrees below zero kills the sprout in some seeds. Professor Bequaert found three seeds eighty-seven years old that sprouted.

Work is going on steadily to deepen and widen the Suez canal, and ere long the biggest merchant vessels with a depth of twelve meters will be able to use it.

F. S. Weinholt, of Brookside, Pa., last season raised on twenty-five acres about three thousand bushels of ear corn. Many of the ears were over sixteen inches in length.

For a number of years Washington has been far and away the largest lumber producing State in the Union, and it still is ahead; but last year Louisiana nearly caught up with it.

Dr. James Critchton Browne, who is the real authority behind most wise-acts and oracles on "feeding," says: "The meat ration of the Japs in Manchuria was the largest ever served in any army."

Of the revenue accruing from the national forests in Colorado 25 per cent, or \$60,000, is yearly turned over to the State by the federal authorities for use on the public roads and schools.—Outing.

Helen, aged 6, was telling Mary, age 7, of her plans for the future. "I'm going to be married," she announced, "and have eighteen children." "Oh," gasped Mary, her eyes wide with amazement, "you mercenary wretch!"

The population of Germany, apart from immigration and emigration, increased by 882,624 last year. In England, the births exceeded the deaths by 393,821; in Italy, by 357,178; in Belgium, by 71,715; in Holland, by 88,156; in France, by 46,411.

In old Holland, when a couple applied for divorce, they were locked up in a one-room, trying-out-cabin, with one dish and one spoon. If, after a month, they had not come to limerick they got the writ which was seldom asked for after this bundling.

The sign read "Children Under Five Years of Age Free." The conductor looked at it mournfully. "You may not believe it," said he, "but a woman with five children, all hers, got on the car the other day and convinced me that none of them was old enough to pay. Somehow, I can't believe it yet."—New York Sun.

A news item stating that Guatemala is considering putting her monetary system on a gold basis recalls a poker story about four players with \$1,000,000 (Guatemalan) in the pot, which the winner exchanged for \$400 (American gold), but it took him four days to do it, as \$100 gold was all the money changer would part with at a time.

Lord Lister, discoverer of antiseptics, saw in 1867, near a hospital, an old cholera pit which emitted a horrid stench as it was standing open for the next corpses. Walls were formed on three sides of coffins piled one upon another, and this was right under the hospital window. There were five thousand cholera corpses in eighty pits in the hospital yard.

The fleet of the Graham & Morton Company, operating on the southern part of Lake Michigan, is being equipped with wireless telegraph instruments. There will be an operator on each boat and also one at each of the stations to be established at Chicago, Holland and Benton Harbor. This service is available for passengers and also for emergency.

One of the greatest works performed by Americans in Korea was the making of the Korean-English dictionary. This was done by Dr. J. S. Gale, a Presbyterian missionary. He began it in 1892, after a four years' residence in the country, and completed it within five years. Prior to that there was no means of intercommunication between the foreigners and the natives except through the Chinese language.

There is a rumor that Hartford, Conn., intends to make a bid for fame by establishing an asylum for the treatment of automobiles that have been worn out in the service, and that a society for the prevention of cruelty to automobiles is also under consideration. A speed antidote and a method of injecting common sense into chauffeurs might lessen the labors of the proposed institutions.—New York Tribune.

Dr. Doche (French army) says that spawning is really the cause of some oyster poison in summer. Spawning oysters are sometimes called "milky." Their juice looks something like milk. Doche says this milky juice holds poisons which the oyster throws off in spawning. He tells of the violent poisoning of a number of soldiers from eating "milky" oysters. Dread of summer oysters is practically universal, and the "R months" is a safe saying.

Twelve years ago Prince Buelow was a poor man. He retires from the office of German chancellor with a large private fortune and the rank of count and prince. On the day the kaiser gave him the latter title Buelow was notified that his share of the estate of Hedd Godfrey, the wealthy sugar merchant of Hamburg, amounted to \$1,375,000. Herr Godfrey had never met Prince Buelow, but had become interested in his public career and left him his fortune.