

The Main Chance

BY Meredith Nicholson

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CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

John Saxton sat in the office of the Traction Company on a hot night in July. Fenton had just left him. The transfer to the Margrave syndicate had been effected and John would no more sign himself "John Saxton, Receiver." His work in the Traction Company had been a termination of his service with them. He had lately sold the Bonded Trust Company had called him to Boston for a conference, which meant, he knew, a termination of his service with them. He had lately sold the Bonded Trust Company had called him to Boston for a conference, which meant, he knew, a termination of his service with them. He had lately sold the Bonded Trust Company had called him to Boston for a conference, which meant, he knew, a termination of his service with them.

"My Dear Sir: I hesitate about writing you, but there are some things which I should like you to understand before I go away. I had fully expected to remain with you and Bishop Delafield and to return to the Traction Company as a receiver. I cannot defend myself for having run away; it must have seemed a strange thing to you that I did so. I had fully intended acting on the bishop's advice, which I knew then, and know now, was good. But when the west-bound train came, my courage left me; I could not go back and face the people I had known, after what had happened. I told you the truth there in the ranch house that night; every word of it was true. Maybe I did not make it clear enough how weak I am. Things came too easy for me, I guess; at any rate I was never worthy of the good fortune that befell me. It seemed to me that for two years everything I did was a mistake. I suppose if I had been a real criminal, and not merely a coward, I should not have entangled myself as I did and brought calamity upon other people.

When I reached here I found employment with a shipping house. I have told my story to one of the firm, who has been kind to me. He seems to understand my case, and is giving me a good chance to begin over again. I suppose the worst possible thing has been said about me, and I do not care, except that I hope the people in the Traction Company will not think I was guilty of any wrong-doing at the bank. I read in the newspapers that I had stolen the bank's money, and I hope that was corrected. The books must have proved what I say. I understand now that what I did was worse than stealing, but I should like you and Mr. Porter to know that I not only did not take other people's money, but that in my foolish relations with Margrave I did not receive a cent for the shares of stock which he took from me—neither for my own nor for those of Miss Porter. I don't blame Margrave; if I had not been a coward he could not have played with me as he did.

"The company is sending me to one of its South American houses. I go by steamer to-morrow, and you will not hear from me again. I should like you to know that I have never seen or heard anything of my brother since that night. With best wishes for your own happiness and prosperity, yours sincerely,

JAMES WHEATON.

On his way home to the club Saxton stopped at Bishop Delafield's rooms, and found the bishop, as usual, preparing for flight. Time did not change Bishop Delafield. He was one of those men who reach 90, and never, apparently, pass it. He and Saxton were fast friends now. The bishop missed Worry out of his life; Worry was always so accessible and so cheerful. John was not so accessible and he had not Worry's lightness, but the Bishop of Clarkson liked John Saxton. The bishop sat with his inevitable hand-baggage by his side and read Wheaton's letter through.

"How ignorant we are!" he said, folding it. "I sometimes think that we who try to minister to the needs of the poor in spirit do not even know the rudiments of our trade. We are pretty helpless with men like Wheaton. They are apparently strong; they yield to no temptations, so far as any man knows; they are exemplary characters. I suppose that they are living little tragedies all the time. The moral coward is more to be pitied than the open criminal. You know where to find the criminal; but the moral coward is an unknown quantity. Life is a strange business, John, and the older I get the less I think I know of it." He signed and handed back the letter.

"But he's doing better than we might have expected him to," said Saxton. "A man's entitled to happiness if he can find it. He undoubtedly chose the easier part in running away. I can't imagine him coming back here to face the community after all that had happened."

"I don't know that I can either. Preaching is easier than practicing, and I'm not sure that I gave him the best advice at the ranch house that morning."

"Well, it was the only thing to do," Saxton answered. "I suppose neither you nor I was sure he told the truth; it was a situation that was calculated to make one skeptical. It isn't clear from his letter that the whole thing has impressed him in any great way. He's anxious to have us thing well of him—a kind of retrospective vanity."

"But his punishment is great. It's not for us to pass on its adequacy. I must be going. John," and Saxton gathered up the battered cases and went out to the car with him.

Bishop Delafield always brought Worry back vividly to John, and as they waited on the corner he remembered his last meeting with the bishop, in Worry's

rooms at The Bachelors'. And that was very long ago!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Uncertainty and doubt filled John Saxton's mind and heart, and he saw no light ahead. He had seen Evelyn several times before she had left home, on occasions when he went to the house with Fenton for conferences with her father. He had intended saying good-by to her, but the Porters went hurriedly to bed and he was not sorry; it was easier that way. But Mrs. Whipple, who was exercising a motherly supervision over John, had exacted a promise from him to come to Orchard Lane during the time that she and the general were to be with the Porters in their new cottage. When he went East, Saxton settled down at his club in Boston, and pretended that it was good to be at home again; but he went about with homesickness gnawing his heart. He had reason to be happy and satisfied with himself. He had practically concluded the difficult work which he had been sent to Clarkson to do; he had realized more money from their assets than the officers of the trust company had expected; and they held out to him the promise of employment in their Boston office as a reward. So he walked the familiar streets planning his future anew. He had succeeded in something at last, and he would stay in Boston, having, he told himself, earned the right to live there. The assistant secretaryship of the trust company, which had been mentioned to him, would be a position of dignity and promise. He had never hoped to do so well. Moreover, it would be pleasant to be near his sister, who lived at Worcester. There were only the two of them, and they ought to live near together.

It is, however, an unpleasant habit of the fates never to suffer us to debate simple problems long; they must throw in new elements to puzzle us. While he deferred going to Orchard Lane a new perplexity confronted him. One of Margrave's "people" came from New York as the representative of the syndicate that had purchased the Traction Company, and sought an interview. John had met this gentleman at the time the sale was closed; he was a person of consequence in the financial world, who came quickly to the point of his errand. He offered John the position of general manager of the company.

The next day John thought he saw it all more clearly. He went out and walked aimlessly through the hot streets. He realized presently that he had gone into a railway office and asked for a suburban time table. He carried this back to the club, and studied the list of Orchard Lane trains. He found that he could run out almost any hour of the day. He slept and woke refreshed, with the time table still grasped in his hand. He had been very foolish, he concluded; it would be a simple matter to go out to Orchard Lane to call on the Porters and Whipples. The next afternoon he went out to Orchard Lane.

It suited his mood that he should find no one at home at Red Gables but Mr. Porter, who played golf all the morning and slept and experimented at landscape gardening all the afternoon. He welcomed John with unwonted cordiality.

There were some details connected with the transfer of the Traction Company to Margrave's syndicate which Porter had not fully understood, or which Fenton had purposely kept from him; and he pressed John for new light on these matters. John answered or parried as he thought wisest.

John left his greetings for the rest of the household. There was a train at 6 o'clock; it was now 5 and he loitered along, stopping often to look out upon the sea. A group of people was gathered about a tea table on the sloping lawn in front of one of the houses. The colors of the women's dresses were bright against the dark green. It was a gay company; their laughter floated out to him mockingly. He wondered whether Evelyn was there, as he passed on, beating the rocky path with his stick.

Evelyn was not there; but her destination was that particular lawn and its tea table. Turning a bend in the path he came upon her. He had had no thought of seeing her; yet she was coming down the path toward him, her picture hat framed in the dome of a blue parasol. He had renounced her for all time, and he should meet her guardedly; but the blood was singing in his temples and throbbing in his finger tips at the sight of her.

"This is too bad!" she exclaimed, as they met. "I hope you can come back to the house."

She walked straight up to him and gave him her hand in her quick, frank way.

"I'm sorry, but I must be in to town on this next train," he answered. He turned in the path and walked along beside her.

"This happened to be one of our scattering days, for all except father."

"We had a nice talk, he and I. Your place is charming. Don't let me detain you. I'm sure you were going to join these lotus eaters."

"I don't believe they need me," she answered, evasively. "They seem pretty busy. But if you're hungry—or thirsty, I can get something for you there." They passed the gate, walking slowly along. He knew that he ought to urge her to stop, and that he must hurry on to catch his train; but it was too sweet to be near her; this was the last time and it was his own!

They paused finally and John held open a little gate in a stone wall. He was grave and something of his seriousness communicated itself to her. Clearly, he thought, this was the parting of the ways. "Won't you come in? There are plenty of trains and we'd like you to dine with us."

A great wave of loneliness and yearning swept over her. Her invitation seemed to create new and limitless distances that stretched between them. He spoke incidentally of the offer he had received from the Clarkson Traction Company. "I have refused the offer," he said, quietly. He had not intended to tell her, but it was doubtless just as well; and it would alter nothing. "My work in Clarkson is finished," he went on. "Warfare affairs will make it necessary for me to go back from time to time, but it will not be home again."

"I'm sorry," she said. "I thought you were to be of us. But I suppose there is a greater difference between the East and West than any one can understand who has not known both." They regarded each other gravely, as if this were, of course, the whole matter at issue.

"I can't go back—it's too much; I can't do it," he said, wearily.

"I know how it must be—this last year and Worry! It was all so terrible—for all of us." She was looking away.

John looked at her. It was natural that she should include herself with him in a common grief for the man who had been his friend and whom she had loved. She had always been kind to him; her kindness stung him now, for he knew that it was because of Worry; and a resolve woke in him suddenly. He would not suffer her kindness under a false pretense; he could at least be honest with her.

"I can't go back because he is not there; and because—because you are not there! You don't know—you should never know, but I was disloyal to Worry from the first. I let him talk to me from day to day of you; I let him tell me that he loved you; I never let him know—I never meant any one to know—" He ceased speaking; she was very still and did not look at him. "It was base of me," he went on. "I would gladly have died for him if he had lived; but now that he is dead I can betray him. I hate myself worse than you can hate me. I know how I must wound and shoo— you—"

"Oh, no!" she moaned.

But he went on; he would spare himself nothing.

"It is hideous—it was cowardly of me to come here." His hands were clenched and his face twitched with pain. "Oh, if he had lived!"

She rose now and looked at him with an infinite pity.

"If he had lived," she said, very softly, looking away through the sun-dappled aisles of the orchard, "if he had lived—it would have been the same, John."

But he did not understand. His name as she spoke it rang in his ears. She walked away through the orchard path, which suddenly became to him a path of gold that stretched into paradise; and he sprang after her with a great fear in his heart lest some barrier might descend and shut her out forever.

"Evelyn! Evelyn!"

It was not a voice that called her; it was a spirit, long held in thrall, that had shaken free and become a name.

(The end.)

SAM SOTHERN NOT SAM AT ALL.

His Alliterative Name a Sample of His Father's Jocularities.

Probably there is not one in twenty of the fellow members of his profession, either here or in England, who knows that the name of Sam Sothern, the actor, is not Sam at all, the New York World says.

Mr. Sothern came back to New York on Friday in response to a hurry call to act with Sir Charles Wyndham in "The Mollusc." He has been absent from this country more than fifteen years, although he made his first theatrical appearance in this country with the late John T. Raymond, a friend of his father, E. A. Sothern, in "The Private Secretary." During the early days of the starring career of his brother, E. H. Sothern, Sam, who is not Sam, acted in his support at the old Lyceum.

If Sam Sothern had registered in New York as George Evelyn Augustus T. Sothern possibly his own brother might not have recognized him.

George Evelyn Augustus T. was named to please his mother. His father, who was a comedian off the stage as well as on it, didn't like the long handle. He wanted a name that was short and expressive. He was appearing in "Brother Sam" in London at the time, and, for convenience, tacked the name of the play on the newly born infant. Brother Sam has kept it ever since.

Another thing that Sam Sothern received from his father—this by inheritance—was the tattered yellow manuscript of "Our American Cousin." It didn't seem like a large inheritance at the time, for the elder Sothern had played the piece to a standstill both in this country and in England. So Sam cast the prompt book into a trunk, where it slumbered twenty years until E. H. Sothern, two years ago, decided to revive the play under the name of "Lord Dundreary."

All these years a small fortune had been lurking in the crumpled bunch of papers. As it was Sam's property E. H. Sothern had to pay a fat royalty on it, and as "Lord Dundreary" has been one of E. H. Sothern's biggest successes in recent years a steady stream of American dollars has flowed into Sam's English pockets.

Caused a Breach.

Askitt—Why are you so down on Walker? You used to be the best of friends.

Eggbert—Yes, I know; but last fall he took my part, and I haven't spoken to him since.

Askitt—That sounds queer.

Eggbert—Not necessarily. You see, he's an actor, too—and I wanted the part for myself.

Her Experience.

Mrs. Brown—Do you believe that marriage is a lottery?

Mrs. Green—No. I consider it more of a faith cure.

Mrs. Brown—Why, how's that?

Mrs. Green—Well, I had implicit faith in my husband when we were first married—and now I haven't.

Deeply Interested.

Said She—Oh, I'm just awfully interested in baseball. I have a cousin who belongs to a college bunch.

Said He—Indeed! And what position does he play?

Said She—Well, I forget just now whether he's a knocker or a stopper.

The Explanation.

Edyth—Why did Clara insist on having a quiet wedding?

Mayme—Oh, I suppose she thought it would make talk.

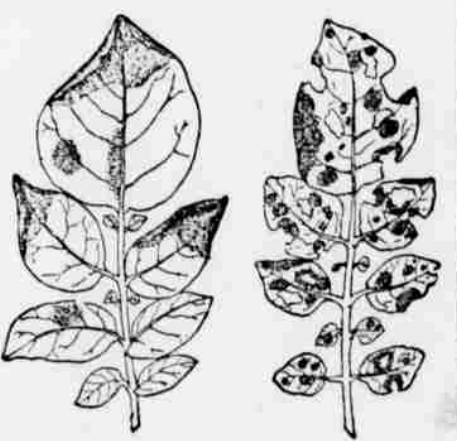
It is estimated that there are 8,000,000 telephones now in use in the world.



Blight of Potatoes.

Early blight is a potato disease which causes more or less damage to the crop every year. The trouble is most marked in unusually dry seasons and is caused by a fungus which grows and spreads rapidly. The spores of this fungus when seen through a microscope have the appearance of clubs. They enter the vines and the first thing one notices is that the leaves are turning yellow. The disease is likely to come during the first or second week in July. It may be easily prevented by spraying with Bordeaux mixture before the disease gets a hold on the crop. After it has a start it is of no use to spray, because the spores are already inside the vines.

In order to kill the potato beetle at the same time, one-fourth of a pound of Paris green may be added to



the barrel of Bordeaux mixture. The spraying can be done quite cheaply. The cost of four sprayings is estimated at \$1.85 per acre. This includes the cost of labor also. In Vermont a trial was conducted by one hundred farmers to test the value of this spray. The period covered five years, and the result was the increase of 70 per cent in yield. The high value of Bordeaux mixture as a preventive of early blight has been proved many times, and should not be overlooked by anyone who expects to raise a good crop of potatoes.

Oats as a Poultry Food.

Oats make an excellent food for the poultry, providing they are of the right kind. The long, slim oat, with plenty of husk or hull is poor feed for anything, but the plump, meaty oat is a good feed for all stock, including poultry.

Hulled oats for young chickens after they are three or four weeks old will help them to make bone and muscle faster than any other one feed, and this is the most desirable element at this period of growth.

For grown or feeding fowls we have at most seasons of the year fed one feed of oats daily with most satisfactory results. We have fed some oats after boiling them for fall and winter feeding, but they were of poor quality, and the boiling was to soften the hulls rather than because the boiling added any other value to the oats feed itself. Boiling is not necessary with good oats except by way of variety in feeding. The best way is to feed them in the litter, scattered well and deeply so the fowls will have to do considerable scratching.—Agricultural Epitomist, in the country.

Weeding One Unprofitable Cow.

Dairy farms are continually advancing in value, which should be regarded as the part of the profits. Grain farming is hard on the land. Many hard run grain farms have been brought back to a good state of fertility by changing to cows.

With the case in test it will be possible to weed out the poor cheese cows on the same principle that we have used the Babcock butter test to weed out the poor butter cows. Instead of keeping cows for cheese which average 70 pounds of casein per 100 pounds of fat, we may breed cows that will produce milk containing close to 10 pounds of casein for 100 pounds of fat. We need to specialize in cheese just as intelligently and carefully as in butter production.

To Tan a Hide.

Take the hide green and salt well. Let it stand for thirty-six hours; then take hair off with lime in the usual way. After taking off hair let hide soak for seven or eight days in clear running water; then scrape and clean off. For a hide of ordinary size dissolve three pounds of alum and five of salt in enough warm (not hot) water to cover it. Put in hide and leave five days, stirring every day. At the end of that time take out and put in vessel with enough clear water to cover; then add five pounds of clean bruised red oak bark. Let this stand till desired color is got; then take out, wash in clear water and hang up. When half dry begin working and work till dry. Small hides in proportion.—Southern Cultivator.

"WHO GIVETH HIMSELF."

A Heart-Rending Sacrifice for the Book-Loving Woman.

Celia Framley had dropped in to have a chat—a "next to the last word," she always called it—with her friend, Marcia Leslie. At last, having talked with all her usual eager vivacity, she sat leisurely back, stirring her cup of tea.

"I'll have another lump, Marcia," she said, with mock reproach. "You're always forgetting that I haven't just one sweet tooth, but a whole set of them. Now tell me, what have you been doing?"

"A very useful thing, my dear," answered her friend, slowly. "I've been interesting myself in Myrtle's reading."

Miss Framley gave a little shriek of amusement. "What, 'The Duchess' and 'Laura Jean Libbey'?" "Oh, what a falling off is there!" she quoted, with genial sarcasm, for immediately her mind made a vivid picture of Myrtle, a half-pretty, wholly pathetic little figure, who plodded patiently through her cleaning cares, apparently unfitted for any others.

But Marcia had already broken out in ardent defense of her protegee. "No, not trash at all, and you'll never believe me, but it's poetry," she said. "I threw away an old Browning text Bob had in college, and Myrtle found it and asked me if she might have it. I gave it to her—and I laughed; and I hate myself whenever I think of it. Do you know, she's read it all, with such intelligent appreciation!"

"Why, the other night she looked at the west, and said, 'Miss Marcia, I suppose that's what Browning means when he says, 'Where the quiet colored end of evening smiles.''" And for her birthday, last week, I gave her Palgrave's 'Golden Treasury'—before this I've always given her silly bows and collars—and she's read it all aloud to her mother, and they loved it. Poor little thing! She has so few books!"

All through Marcia's speech Celia had put in little fluttering "Ahs!" and "Ohs!" of excitement and interest, and when her friend stopped speaking, she was sitting quite on the edge of her chair.

"I'm a beast, and a stupid one, too, to misjudge Myrtle so!" she declared, warmly, for she loved and admired with eager intelligence all good literature. "And as a penance I'm going to give her some of my treasures."

But in the common light of the next day her generous impulse was harder to carry out. She stood before her bookcase, fingering the volumes, and wondering how she could ever bear parting with them. A country doctor's daughter, books were her luxury. The Thackeray she had earned by endless copying of manuscripts for her father; the beautiful edition of Tennyson meant that she had worn shabby gloves for a winter; the set of Jane Austen a willingly renounced party frock.

Her beloved books! Now, half-heartedly, she built her sacrificial pile. Then a sudden thought made her throat tighten and ache a little. Books had always seemed very real to her, their authors living friends. Would her idols feel that she loved them less well, cherished them less tenderly, if she gave them away? She picked up her copy of Lowell, and it fell open easily to "The Vision of Sir Launfal," almost her dearest poem. And out of the whole page these two lines seemed to spring:

"Who giveth himself with his alma feeds three, Himself, his hungering neighbor, and Me!"

"That settles it!" she said, aloud. "Celia, you're a selfish pig! The best way to love the masters is to share their glory with some one else." She caught up a generous armful and ran, hatless, impetuous, to Marcia's door.

"Give these books to Myrtle—and I want her to keep them—with my love!" she panted, and she thrust out the pile. Then she turned and walked quickly away. She had given herself with her alma.—Youth's Companion.

MUSICIAN A MASTER OF WIT.

Biography of Edward Macdowell Reveals Master's Caustic Humor.

In a biography of Edward Macdowell by Lawrence Gilman, the writer quotes some of the famous musician's witticisms. On one occasion he had been told of a performance of his composition, "To a Wild Rose," played by a high-school girl on a high-school piano at a high-school graduation festivity. "Well," Macdowell remarked, "I suppose she pulled it up by the roots!"

Some one sent him, about this time, relates Mr. Humiston, a program of an organ recital at which this same "Wild Rose" was to be played.

"He was not pleased with the idea, thinking doubtless of a style of performance which plays Schumann's 'Traumerei' on the great organ diapasons. He remarked simply that it reminded him of a hippopotamus wearing a clover leaf in his mouth."

A member of one of his classes at Columbia, finding more unoccupied space on the page of his book, after finishing the exercise, filled up the vacancy with rests. When his book was returned the page was covered with corrections—all except these bars of rests, which were inclosed in a red line and marked:

"This is the only correct passage in the exercise."—Youth's Companion.

Wait Until "Out of the Wood."

When thou hast not crossed the river, take care not to insult the crocodile.—Hawaiian Proverb.