



# The Main Chance

BY  
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### CHAPTER IV.—(Continued)

They spent the day in the saddle riding over the range. The ridiculous character of the Poindexter undertaking could not spoil the real value of the land. There was, Saxton could see, the making here of a great farming property; he felt his old interest in outdoor life quickening as he rode back to the house in the evening.

Snyder cooked supper for both of them. While Saxton repaired a decrepit windmill which had been designed to supply the house with water. He had formed a poor opinion of the caretaker, who had no well-defined duties. There was nothing for any one to do, unless the range was again stocked and cattle raising undertaken as a serious business. Saxton was used to rough men and their ways. He had a happy faculty of adapting himself to the conversational capacities of illiterate men, and enjoyed drawing them out and getting their point of view; but Snyder's was not a visage that inspired confidence. He had a great shock of black hair and a scraggy beard. He lacked an eye, and he had a habit of drawing his head around in order to accommodate his remaining orb to any necessity. He did this with an insinuating kind of deliberation that became tiresome in a long interview.

"This place is too fancy to be of much use," the man vouchsafed. "You may find some dude that wants to plant money where another dude has dug the first hole; but I reckon you'll have a hard time catching him. A real cattleman wouldn't care for all this house. It might be made into a stable, but a horse would look ridiculous in here. You might have a corn crib made out of it; or it would do for a hotel if you could get dudes to spend the summer here; but I reckon it's a little hot out here for summer boarders."

"The only real value is in the land," said Saxton. "I'm told there's no better on the river. The house is a handicap, or would be so regarded by the kind of men who make money out of cattle. Have you ever tried rounding up the cattle that strayed through the fence? The Poindexter crowd must have branded their last calves about two years ago. Assuming that only a part of them was sold or run off, there ought to be some two-year-olds still loose in this country and they'd be worth finding."

"Yer jokin' I guess. These fellers around here are good fellers, and all that, but I guess they don't give anything back. I guess we ain't got any cattle coming to us."

"Who've you been reporting to, Snyder?"

"How's that?"

"Who have you been considering yourself responsible to?"

"Well, Jim Wheaton at the Clarkson National hired me, and I reckon I'd report to him if I reported to anybody. But if you're going to run this shebang and want to be reported to, I guess I can report to you."

"I want you to report to me," said John, quietly. "In the first place I want the house and the other buildings cleaned out. After that the fences must be put in shape. And then we'll see if we can't find some of our cows. You can't tell; we may open up a real ranch here and go into business."

"Well, if you're the boss I'll do it your way. I got along all right with Wheaton."

Saxton determined to leave for Clarkson the following morning, and formulated in his mind the result of his journey and plans for the future of the incongruous combination of properties that had been entrusted to him. He sat for an hour looking out over the moon-lit valley. He followed the long sweep of the plain, through which he could see for miles the bright ribbon of the river. A train of cars rumbled far away, on the iron trail between the two oceans, intensifying the loneliness of the strange house.

"I seem to find only the lonely places," he said aloud.

In the morning he ate the breakfast of coffee, hardback and bacon which Snyder prepared. Snyder rode with him to the railway station.

"Give my regards to Mr. Wheaton," he said, as Saxton swung himself into the train. "You'll find me here at the old stand when you come back."

"A queer customer and undoubtedly a bad lot," was Saxton's reflection.

When Saxton had written out the report of his trip he took it to Wheaton, to get his suggestions before forwarding it to Boston. He looked upon the cashier as his predecessor, and wished to avail himself of Wheaton's knowledge of the local conditions affecting the several properties that had now passed to his care. Wheaton undoubtedly wished to be of assistance, and in their discussion on the report, the cashier made many suggestions of value, of which Saxton was glad to avail himself.

"As to the Poindexter place," said Saxton finally, "I've been advertising it for sale in the hope of finding a buyer, but without results. The people at headquarters can't loather about the details of these things, but I can't see why we should maintain a caretaker. There's nothing to take care of. That house is worse than useless. I'm going back in a few days to see if I can't coax home some of the cattle we're entitled to, and then I suppose we may as well dispense with Snyder."

"I don't see that there's anything else to do," Wheaton answered. "I've been to the ranch, and there's little personal property there worth caring for. That

man Snyder came along one day and asked for a job and I sent him out there thinking he'd keep things in order until the Trust Company sent its own representative here."

There were times when Wheaton's black eyes contracted curiously, and this was one of the times.

"I don't like discharging a man that you've employed," Saxton replied.

"Oh, that's all right. You can't keep him if he performs no service. Don't trouble about him on my account. How soon are you going back there?"

"Next week some time."

Saxton was not surprised when he returned to the ranch to find that Snyder had made no effort to obey his instructions. He made his visit unexpectedly. He reached the house in the middle of the morning and found the front door bolted and barred on the inside. After much pounding he succeeded in bringing Snyder to the door, evidently both surprised and displeased at his interruption.

"Howdy, boss," was the salutation of the froxy custodian. "I wasn't feeling just right to-day and was takin' a little nap."

The great hall showed signs of a carcass. The dirt had increased since Saxton's first appearance. Empty bottles that had been doing service as candlesticks stood in their greasy shrouds on the table. Saxton sat down on a box, which had evidently been recently emptied. He resolved to make quick work of Snyder.

"How many cattle have you rounded up since I was here?" he demanded.

"Well, to tell the truth," began Snyder, "there ain't been much time for doing that since you was here."

"No; I suppose you were busy mending fences and cleaning house. Now you have been drawing forty dollars a month for doing nothing. I'll treat you better than you deserve and give you ten dollars bonus to get out. I believe the pony in the corral belongs to you. We'll let it go at that. Here's your money."

"Well, I guess as Mr. Wheaton hired me, he'd better fire me."

"Yes, I spoke to Mr. Wheaton about you. He understands that you're to go. He does, does he?" Snyder asked with a sneer. "He must have forgot that I had an arrangement with him by the year."

"Well, it's all off," said Saxton, rising. He began throwing open the windows and doors to let in fresh air.

"Well, I guess I'll have to see Mr. Wheaton," Snyder retorted, finding that Saxton was paying no further attention to him. He collected his few belongings, watching in astonishment the violence with which Saxton was gathering up and disposing of rubbish.

"He seems to be more interested in Wheaton than Wheaton is in him," observed Saxton to himself.

Saxton spent a week at Great River. He hired a man to repair fences and put the house in order. He visited several of the large ranch owners and asked them for aid in picking out the scattered remnants of the Poindexter herd. Nearly all of the involuntarily to help, with the result that he collected about one hundred cattle and sold them at Great River for cash. He expected to see or hear of Snyder in the town but the fellow had disappeared.

CHAPTER V.

James Wheaton was 35 years old, and was reckoned among the solid business men of Clarkson. He had succeeded far beyond his expectations and was fairly content with the round of the ladder that he had reached. He never talked about himself and as he had no intimate friends it had never been necessary for him to give confidences. His father had been a harness-maker in a little Ohio town; he and his older brother were expected to follow the same business; but the brother grew restless under the threat of enforced apprenticeship and prevailed on James to run away with him. They became tramps and enjoyed themselves roaming through the country, until finally they were caught stealing in a little Illinois village and both were arrested.

James was discharged through the generosity of his brother in taking all the blame on himself; the older boy was sent to a reformatory alone. James then went to Chicago, where he sold papers and blacked boots for a year until he found employment as a train boy, with a company operating on various lines running out of Chicago. This gave him a wide acquaintance with Western towns, and incidentally with railroads and railroad men. He grew tired of the road, and obtained at Clarkson a position in the office of Timothy Margrave, the general manager of the Transcontinental, which, he had heard, was a great primary school for ambitious boys.

He attended night school, was assistant in his duties, and attained in due course the dignity of a desk as which he took the cards of Margrave's callers, indexed the letter books and copied figures under the direction of the chief clerk. After a year, hearing that one of the Clarkson National Bank's messengers was about to resign, he applied for this place. Margrave recommended him; the local manager of the news agency vouched for his integrity, and in due course he was seated in the streets of Clarkson with a long bill-book, the outward and visible sign of his position as messenger. He was steadily promoted in the bank and felt his past preceding father and farther behind him.

When, at an important hour of his life, Wheaton was promoted to be paying teller, he was in the receiving teller's cage. He had known that the more desirable position was vacant and had heard his fellow clerks speculating as to the possibility of a promotion from among their number. Thompson, the cashier, had a nephew in the bank, and among the clerks he was thought to have the best chance. They all knew that the directors were in session, and several whose tasks for the day were finished, lingered later than was their wont to see what would happen. Wheaton kept quietly at his work; but he had an eye on the door of the directors' room, and an ear that insensibly turned toward the annunciator by which messengers were called to the board room. It rang at last, and Wheaton wiped his pen with a little more than his usual care as he waited for the result of the summons. This was on his twenty-fifth birthday.

"Mr. Wheaton?" The other clerks looked at one another. The question that had been uppermost with all of them for a week past was answered. Thompson's nephew slammed his book shut and carried it into the vault. Wheaton put aside the balance sheet over

## PROCEEDINGS OF CONGRESS IN BRIEF

Tuesday, July 13.

Washington, July 13.—An unexpected burst of speed was exhibited by the tariff conferees tonight and the first consideration of the bill was completed. When tomorrow's session begins the struggle over important differences of the senate and house will open.

Thus far all questions involving raw materials, which have been the subjects of heated disputes, have been put over after brief discussions. The session tonight adjourned at 9:45 o'clock in order that the conferees could get the benefit of a good night's rest and be ready for the big battle at 10 o'clock tomorrow morning.

By passing over the cotton and woolen schedules without taking up any of the amended paragraphs and skipping the disputed points of the lumber schedule, the conferees were able to dispose of about 400 senate amendments.

Monday, July 12.

Washington, July 12.—By the decisive vote of 317 to 14, more than the necessary two-thirds, the house today passed the senate joint resolution providing for the submission of an income tax constitutional amendment to the states. The negative votes were all cast by Republicans. The resolution now goes to the president for his signature.

The debate lasted four hours. Chairman Payne, of the committee on ways and means, voiced the sentiment that such a tax would make "a nation of liars." The burden of the Democratic speeches was that it was simply a case of stealing Democratic thunder, although some of the remarks on that side incidentally touched upon tariff and the corporation tax, with no little amount of castigation of the Republicans for failing to keep party pledges.

Friday, July 9.

Washington, July 9.—During a session lasting nearly four hours, the senate today passed the Philippine tariff bill, and the bill automatically continuing the Porto Rican budget. Only a nominal resistance was offered by the minority to the measure. An amendment to the Philippine bill by Johnston, of Alabama, declaring the intention of the United States eventually to grant independence to the Philippines, was rejected.

Washington, July 9.—The tariff bill is now in the hands of the conference committee. After an hour and a half of debate the house today, by a vote of 178 to 151, disagreed to the senate amendments. Eighteen Republicans voted against sending the bill to conference, and one Democrat voted with the Republican majority.

Washington, July 9.—The house and senate conferees on the tariff bill this afternoon mapped out the program for the many sessions they must hold to make the final draft of the measure. An agreement may be reached in 10 days, though the house conferees are expected bitterly to contest many of the senate amendments.

Senator Aldrich and Representative Payne are fearful lest the final action on the conference report in the two houses be delayed, and an effort is being made to have President Taft take part in the threatened controversy.

Thursday, July 8.

Washington, July 8.—The tariff bill passed the senate just after 11 o'clock tonight by a vote of 45 to 34. Ten Republicans voted with the Democrats against the bill and one Democrat voted for the bill.

As it passed the senate, the bill contains almost 400 paragraphs. The senate made 840 amendments to the house bill, many of which were added today. Consequently the enrolling clerks are finishing the preparation of the bill for the house an arduous task. They have been following as closely upon the heels of the senate as was possible, and have the work well in hand, but say they probably will not be able to complete their labors before late tomorrow.

There will be no delay in sending the tariff bill to conference after it reaches the house. It is expected that the bill will be sent to that body by the senate late tomorrow. The house will meet daily from now until the end of the session.

As soon as the bill is received, Dalzell is expected to offer a resolution by which the house will disagree to the senate amendments en bloc and agree to a conference.

Wednesday, July 7.

Washington, July 7.—With a general understanding that the final vote on the tariff bill should be taken by 4 o'clock tomorrow afternoon, the senate adjourned at 7 o'clock this evening. The arrangement for a vote tomorrow was arrived at as an alternative for a session tonight. The income tax question, including the corporation tax provision and inheritance tax, received much attention in the senate today and the straight income advocates were afforded the opportunity to get a vote.

Taft Given "Big Stick."

Washington, July 14.—President Taft was presented with a bludgeon six feet long and shaped like a big stick of Rooseveltian authority, which became famous during the last administration. The donor was J. E. Forbes, of Ottawa, Kan., who sent it with this message: "The Almighty probably grew this big stick for some good purpose, and I expect that it was to allow you to swat the tariff bill and other schemes of criminal extortion."

WILL DEPOSE SHAH.

Revolutionists in Persia Gaining on Government Forces.

St. Petersburg, July 12.—The Russian expedition from Baku which landed at Enzeli, a Persian seaport on the Caspian yesterday, is made up of 1,000 Russian and 800 Cossack cavalry, with eight field guns and eight machine guns. Despite the correct attitude maintained by the Russians, the natives are demonstrating their unfriendliness.

The unopposed advance of Siphidar, the leader of the revolutionists, and Sardarsad, the chief of the Bakhtiari tribesmen, towards Teheran, is taken here to mean that General Liakhoff, the governor of Teheran, considers his force inadequate to engage in a general battle, and that he has decided to employ his Cossack brigade merely as a guard over the life of the shah.

Persons well informed here regard the entrance of the revolutionists into Teheran as a foregone conclusion, while the deposition of the shah, which several times has been mooted, will now arouse no surprise.

ESKIMO WILL SEEK POLE.

Boy Brought Here by Peary Will Try for Arctic Honors.

New York, July 12.—Separated from his native home for 13 years, Mene Wallace, an Eskimo boy brought to this country with five of his people by Commander Peary from the Polar regions, sailed today on the Red Cross line steamship Rosalind, for St. Johns, N. F., whence he will be conveyed to his home in Greenland.

Before Mene sailed, the Arctic club extracted from him a written agreement that he would not again return to this country and that while in Greenland he would not bear arms against the Peary expedition. This was due, it is believed, to the fact that Mene, angered at the attitude of Peary and the Arctic club in refusing to take him back to Greenland, once safe in his native home, might seek revenge for the treatment he received while in this country.

Mene said he would organize an expedition of Eskimos to find the North pole.

PRESENT WRITING TABOOED.

Uniform Method to Be Used in Philadelphia Schools.

Philadelphia, July 12.—Both vertical and Spencerian handwriting have been tabooed in the public schools of this city, and after this a uniform method of penmanship will be adopted.

Numerous complaints have been received from business men who can't decipher the writing of their clerks and applicants for jobs who have learned their peculiar style of chirography in the public schools.

For some time Superintendent Brumbaugh has been at work on a plan to unify and improve the writing, and this plan was adopted at a meeting of the elementary schools committee.

A free, legible style of writing, slightly slanting to the right, will be taught. Students, no matter how advanced they may think their flourishes, will have to begin again with pot hooks and ciphers.

According to the new code, writing will be taught like calligraphy or a manual exercise. The teacher will clap her hands and count, and the entire class will make letters with hooks and tails and crosses simultaneously. The exercise is intended to give a free mechanical movement to the arm and increase the speed.

Earthquakes in France.

Marseilles, July 12.—Earth shocks occurred last night throughout the same region which suffered seismic disturbances in June. The shocks lasted four or five seconds, and were in a direction from east to west. The inhabitants of Rogues, Lambese and St. Cannat and other communes in the Aix district were panic stricken and rushed from their dwellings. They are now camping in the open. At Marseilles the patients in La Conception hospital were greatly alarmed, but they were reassured by the surgeons.

Teachers' Occupation is Gone.

San Juan, Porto Rico, July 12.—The steamer Carolina has sailed from here for New York, having on board all the American school teachers who taught in Porto Rico last year under contract. The failure of the United States senate to pass the Olmsted bill, which was designed to remedy the deadlock existing between the executive council and the house of delegates, leaves the island without money to begin the fiscal year, since the legislature has made no appropriation.

Judgeship for Hughes.

Chicago, July 12.—A Washington special to the Tribune today says: There is a strong impression in New York and Vermont that President Taft will offer Governor Hughes the first vacancy that occurs in the United States Supreme court. The tender of the appointment is regarded as contingent upon the coming of a vacancy at a time when the New York governor can accept it. Many friends of Governor Hughes do not think he would accept.

Troops Rush to Morocco.

Madrid, July 12.—The First brigade of Cazadors, composed of six battalions of infantry, three batteries of artillery and a squadron of cavalry, as well as the cruiser Nucania and the transport Admiral Lobo, have been ordered to Melilla, Morocco, where yesterday four Spanish workmen were killed by natives