

The Main Chance

BY
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CHAPTER XVIII.

The affairs of the Traction Company proved to be in a wretched tangle. Saxton employed an expert accountant to open a set of books for the company, while he gave his immediate attention to the physical condition of the property. The company's service was a byword and a hissing in the town, and he did what he could to better it, working long hours, but enjoying the labor. It had been a sudden impulse on Fenton's part to have Saxton made receiver. In Saxton's first days at Clarkson he had taken legal advice of Fenton in matters which had already been placed in the lawyer's hands by the bank; but most of these had long been closed, and Saxton had latterly gone to Raridan for such legal assistance as he needed from time to time. Fenton had firmly intended asking Wheaton's appointment; this seemed to him perfectly natural and proper in view of Wheaton's position in the bank and his relations with Porter, which were much less confidential than even Fenton imagined.

Fenton had been disturbed to find Margrave and Wheaton together in the directors' room the night before the annual meeting of the Traction stockholders. He could imagine no business that would bring them together; and the hour and the place were not propitious for forming new alliances for the bank. Wheaton had appeared agitated as he passed out the packet of bonds and stocks; and Margrave's efforts at gaiety had only increased Fenton's suspicions. From every point of view it was unfortunate that Porter should have fallen ill just at this time; but it was, on the whole, just as well to take warning from circumstances that were even slightly suspicious, and he had decided that Wheaton should not have the receivership. He had not considered Saxton in this connection until the hour of the Traction meeting; and he had inwardly debated it until the moment of his decision at the street corner.

He had expected to supervise Saxton's acts, but the receiver had taken hold of the company's affairs with a real and an intelligence which surprised him. Saxton wasn't so slow as he looked, he said to the federal judge, who had accepted Saxton wholly on Fenton's recommendation. Within a fortnight Saxton had improved the service of the company to the public so markedly that the newspapers praised him. He reduced the office force to a working basis and installed a cashier who was warranted not to steal. It appeared that the motormen and conductors held their positions by paying tribute to certain minor officers, and Saxton applied heroic treatment to these abuses without ado.

The motormen and conductors grew used to the big blond in the long gray ulster who was forever swinging himself aboard the cars and asking them questions. They affectionately called him "Whiskers," for no obvious reason, and the report that Saxton had, in one of the power-houses, filled his pipe with sweepings of tobacco factories known in the trade as "Trolleyman's Special," had further endeared him to those men whose pay checks bore his name as receiver. In snow-storms the Traction Company had usually given up with only a tame struggle, but Saxton devised a new snowplow, which he hitched to a trolley and drove with his own hand over the Traction Company's tracks.

John was cleaning out the desk of the late secretary of the company one evening while Raridan read a newspaper and waited for him. Worry was often lonely these days. Saxton was too much engrossed to find time for frivolity, and Mr. Porter's illness cut sharply in on Worry's visits to the Hill. He was resting while he waited for the Transcontinental to exhaust its usual tactics of delay and come to trial. On Fenton's suggestion Saxton had intrusted to Raridan some matters pertaining to the receivership, and these served to carry Worry over an interval of idleness and restlessness.

"You may hang me," said Saxton, suddenly. He had that day unexpectedly come upon the long-lost stock records of the company and was now examining them. Thrust into one of the books were two canceled certificates.

"It's certainly queer," he said, as Worry went over to his desk. He spread out one of the certificates which Margrave had taken from Wheaton the night before the annual meeting. "That's certainly Wheaton's endorsement all right enough."

Raridan took off his glasses and brought his near-sighted gaze to bear critically upon the paper.

"There's no doubt about it."

"And look at this, too." Saxton handed him Evelyn Porter's certificate. Raridan examined it and Evelyn's signature on the back with greater care. He carried the paper nearer to the light, and scanned it again while Saxton watched him and smoked his pipe.

"You notice that Wheaton witnessed the signature?"

Raridan nodded. Saxton, who knew his friend's moods thoroughly, saw that he was troubled.

"I can find no plausible explanation of that," said Saxton. "Anybody may be called on to witness a signature, but I can't explain this. He opened the stock record and followed the history of the two certificates from one page to another. It was clear enough that the certificates held by Evelyn Porter and James Wheaton had been merged into one, which had been made out in the name of Timothy Margrave, and dated the day before the annual meeting.

"It doesn't make much difference at present," said Saxton. "When Mr. Porter comes down town he will undoubtedly

ly go over this whole business and he can easily explain these matters."

"It makes a lot of difference," said Worry, gloomily.

"We'd better not say anything about this just now—not even to Fenton," Saxton suggested. "I'll take these things over to my other office for safe keeping. Some one may want them badly enough to look for them."

Raridan sat down with his newspaper and pretended to be reading until Saxton was ready to go.

CHAPTER XIX.

The iron thrall of winter was broken at last. Great winds still blew in the valley, but their keen edge was dulled. Robins and bluejays, coming before the daffodils dared, looked down from bare boughs upon the receding line of snow on the Porter hillside. The yellow river had shaken itself free of ice, and its swollen flood rolled seaward. Porter watched it from his windows; and early in March he was allowed to take short walks in the grounds. He was much weakened by his illness, and though he pleaded daily to be allowed to go to the bank, he submitted to Evelyn's refusal with a tameness that was new in him. Fenton came several times for short interviews; Thompson called as an old friend as well as a business associate. Wheaton was often at the house, and Porter preferred his account of bank matters to Thompson's. Wheaton carried the figures in his head, and answered questions offhand, while Thompson was helpless without the statements which he was always having the clerks make for him. Porter fretted and fumed over Traction matters, though Fenton did his best to reassure him.

He did not understand why Saxton should have been made receiver; if Fenton was able to dictate the appointment, why did he ignore Wheaton, who could have been spared from the bank easily enough when Thompson returned. Fenton did not tell him the true reason—but he urged the fact that Saxton represented certain shares which were entitled to consideration, and he made much of the danger of Thompson's breaking down at any moment and having to leave. Porter dreaded litigation, and wanted to know how soon the receivership could be terminated and the company reorganized. The only comfort he derived from the situation was the victory which had been gained over Margrave, who had repeatedly sent messages to the house asking for an interview with Porter at the earliest moment possible. The banker's humor had not been injured by the fever, and he told Evelyn and the doctor that he'd almost be willing to stay in bed a while longer merely to annoy Tim Margrave.

"If I'd known I was going to be sick, I guess I wouldn't have tackled it," he said to Fenton one day, holding up his thin hand to the fire. The doctors had found his heart weak and had cut off his tobacco, which he missed sorely. "I might unload as soon as we can rebound and reorganize."

"That's for you to say," answered the lawyer. "Margrave wanted it, and no doubt he would be glad to take it off your hands if you care to deal with him."

"If I was sure I had a dead horse, I guess I'd as lief let Tim carry him as any man in town; but I don't believe this animal is dead."

"Not much," said the lawyer, reassuringly. "Saxton says he's making money every day, now that nobody is stealing the revenues. He's painting the open cars and expects to do much better through the summer."

"I guess Saxton doesn't know much about the business," said Porter.

"He knows more than he did. He's all right, that fellow—slow but sure. He's been a surprise to everybody. He's solid with the men, too, they tell me. I guess there won't be any strikes while he's in charge."

"You'd better get a good man to keep the accounts," Porter suggested. "Wheaton's pretty keen on such things."

"Oh, that's all fixed. Saxton brought a man out from an Eastern audit company to run that for him, and he deposits with the bank."

"All right," said Porter, weakly.

Saxton came and talked to him of the receivership several times, and Porter quizzed him about it in his characteristic vein. Saxton was very patient under his cross-examination, and reassured the banker by his manner and his facts. Porter had lost his jaunty way, and after the first interview he contented himself with asking how the receipts were running and how they compared with those of the year previous. Saxton suggested several times to Fenton that he would relinquish the receivership, now that Porter was able to nominate some one to his own liking. The lawyer would not have it so. He believed in Saxton and he felt sure that when Porter could get about and see what the receiver had accomplished he would be satisfied. It would be foolish to make a change until Porter had fully recovered and was able to take hold of Traction matters in earnest.

Saxton had suddenly become a person of importance in the community. The public continued to be mystified by the legal stroke which had placed William Porter virtually in possession of the property; and it naturally took a deep interest in the court's agent who was managing it so successfully. Worry Raridan was delighted to find Saxton praised, and he dealt ironically with those who expressed surprise at Saxton's capacity. He was glad to be associated with John, and when he could find an excuse, he liked to visit the power house with him, and to identify himself in any way possible with his friend's work. During the extreme cold he paid from his own pocket for the hot coffee which was handed up to the motormen along all the lines, and gave it out to the newspapers that the receiver was doing it. John warned him that this would appear reckless and injure him with the judge of the court to whom he was responsible.

Though Porter was not strong enough to resume his business burdens, he was the better able in his abundant leisure to quibble over domestic and social matters with an invalid's unreason. He was troubled because Evelyn would not go out; she had missed practically all the social gaiety of the winter by reason of his illness, and he wished her to feel free to leave him when she liked. In his careful reading of the newspapers he noted the items classified under "The Giddy Throng" and "Social Clarkson," and it pained him to miss Evelyn's name in the list of those who "poured," or "as-

sisted," or "were charming" in some particular raiment.

The doctor advised a change for Porter, the purpose of which was to make it impossible for him to return to his work before his complete recovery Evelyn and the doctor chose Asheville before they mentioned it to him, and the plan, of course, included his son Grant. Mrs. Whipple still supervised the Porter household at long range, and the general frequently called alone to help the banker over the hard places in his convalescence.

A day had been fixed for their departure, and Mrs. Whipple was reviewing and approving their plans in the library, as Evelyn and her father and Grant discussed them.

"We shall probably not see you at home much in the future," Mrs. Whipple said to Mr. Porter, who lay in invalid ease on a lounge, with a Roman comforter over his knees. "You'll be sure to become the worst of gadabouts—Europe, the far East, and all that."

"I guess not," he said, emphatically. "I never expect to have any time for loafing."

"Well, you're going now, anyhow. Don't let this girl get into mischief while you're away. An invalid father—only a young brother to care for her and keep the suitors away! Be sure and bring her back without a trail of encumbrances. Grant," she said, turning to the boy, "you must protect Evelyn from those Eastern men."

"I'll do my best," the lad answered. "Evelyn doesn't like dudes, and Worry says all the real men live out West."

"I guess that's right," said Mr. Porter. She rose, gathering her wrap about her. Grant rose as she did, and he walked into the hall and took up his hat to go down to the car with Mrs. Whipple. It was dusk, and a man was going through the grounds lighting the lamps. Mrs. Whipple talked with her usual vivacity of the New Hampshire school which the boy had attended, and of the trip he was about to make with his father and sister. They stood at the curb in front of the Porter gate waiting for her car. A buggy stopped near them and a man alighted and stood talking to a companion who remained seated.

"Is this the way to Mr. Porter's stable?" one of the men called to them.

"Yes," Grant answered, as he stepped into the street to signal the car. The man who had alighted got back into the buggy as if to drive into the grounds. The street light overhead hissed and then burned brightly above them. Mrs. Whipple turned and saw one of the men plainly. The car came to a stop; Grant helped her aboard, and waved his hand to her as she gained the platform.

At 9 o'clock a general alarm was sent out in Clarkson that Grant Porter had disappeared.

(To be continued.)

SITE OF TYBURN TREE.

Marble Tablet Placed on Spot Where Thousands Met Death.

Thousands of English malefactors and thousands who were not malefactors, according to modern ideas, met their death at the hands of the hangman on a spot in one of the busiest centers of London county council, a London dispatch says.

The spot is the site of the famous Tyburn tree, the gallows on which London's criminals were hanged for more than 600 years. It is situated at the junction of Oxford street, Edge ware road and Bayswater road, opposite the marble arch which marks the principal entrance to Hyde Park. Shops and mansions looked out on the spot which was once availed by the superstitious.

The London county council has marked the exact spot where the permanent gallows stood by letting a tab let into the roadway. It bears an excellent representation of the old gallows, surrounded by a triangle with the following inscription:

"Here stood Tyburn Tree. Removed 1759."

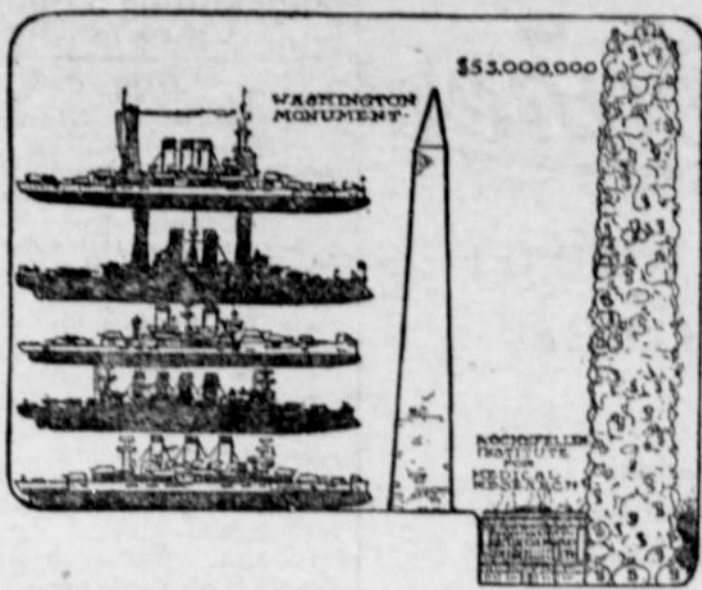
The exact site was only fixed after much research and poring over old maps by the county council's archaeological experts. The reason for the difficulty was that different authorities—equally trustworthy—gave two sites for Tyburn tree, and it was not until it was discovered that there were really two of them that the mystery was solved. The spot now marked is the site of the old permanent gallows which it is known was in use in 1196 which was probably standing for many years before that time and which was removed in 1759. It was replaced by a movable gallows which was situated a few hundred yards away and was finally removed in 1783, when it was decided that public executions were barbarous spectacles, and that men and women should be hanged in future within the walls of Newgate prison.

At the time when Tyburn tree was bearing its dreadful fruit its site was far out in the country. Oxford street, now London's greatest shopping thoroughfare, was a country road and was known as Tyburn road. It is the direct route from Newgate prison. In the old city of London, to Tyburn, and it was the last road over which the condemned men traveled, sitting in an open cart with a priest or clergyman standing beside them and a mob of curious spectators following. Half way to Tyburn tree there was a liquor shop known as "Last Drink House," at which the condemned man was always served with a quart of ale. That has long since been destroyed and a great business building stands on its site.

Many famous criminals were hanged on Tyburn tree and it is estimated that at least 50,000 persons met their death there. Claude Duval, the famous highwayman, was hanged there, and John Price, the original "Jack Ketch," the hangman, was hanged for murder in 1718 on the very gallows on which he had hanged so many other men.

A man may live justly by avoiding what he blames in others.—Montaigne.

MR. ROCKEFELLER'S GIFTS.



Amount He Has Given to One Institution Equals Cost of Five Battle Ships.

JOHAN D. ROCKEFELLER celebrated his seventieth birthday by giving \$10,000,000 to the General Education Board, making the total of his gifts to that philanthropy the stupendous sum of \$53,000,000 and bringing the grand total of his known benefactions to the aggregate of \$129,000,000. Add his unknown gifts to innumerable institutions, objects and individuals, and the final figures are probably in excess of \$135,000,000—a sum of money so huge that its magnitude is difficult to estimate.

Take alone the gift of \$10,000,000 officially announced by Frederick T. Gates, chairman of the General Education Board. Some idea of what \$10,000,000 amounts to can be had in this way: A comfortable home, capable of adequately housing a family of average circumstances, can be bought in Brooklyn for \$5,000. Mr. Rockefeller's gift would buy 2,000 such homes for 2,000 families. His total gifts of \$53,000,000 to the General Education Board would buy 10,600 such homes. The total of all of his gifts, \$135,000,000, would buy 27,000 such homes. Five persons is the average of a family. Twenty-seven thousand such homes would mean a city of 135,000 persons. There are many pretentious cities in the United States where all of the homes of its citizens do not represent an outlay of half the money given away by Mr. Rockefeller.

Report has given Mr. Rockefeller \$400,000,000, but men with some means of estimating his wealth say that is an exaggeration. If his fortune be \$200,000,000, his income at 5 per cent would be \$10,000,000. If \$400,000,000, it would be \$20,000,000. This \$53,000,000 he has given the General Education Board is for a single purpose—to multiply and widen educational facilities for American boys and girls, irrespective of creed or anything else. Colleges all over the country, particularly in those sections where the need is greatest, are the beneficiaries of the fund. They receive \$5,000, \$10,000, \$50,000, \$100,000 or \$200,000, or whatever sum the trustees of the fund believe they are entitled to.—New York World.

MATRIMONIAL DIARY.

Within recent months we have noted that more and more frequently diaries have been introduced into divorce trials kept by one or both parties to the suit. Sometimes these diaries were begun long previous to any open disagreement between man and wife, when one or the other may have been unconscious of any infelicity between them. In such a case the unsuspecting one, all unguarded in his or her innocence, has been daily recording in the accusing book, every act that would be prejudicial in the eyes of court or jury set down in black and white and in cold blood. There is no distinction in law between divorce sought in a hot temper and divorce with malice aforethought.

We sincerely trust that the "holy bonds of matrimony" will not become generally vitiated by the practice of keeping a diary dating from the wedding day, and that bride and groom

known where they are. They are secret bodies and move in darkness. The Six Companies five months ago appealed to the Chinese consul general to stop a war between several of the tong. The best he could do was to get them to declare a truce, which lasted until the Chinese New Year. But as these lines are being written the New Year festivals have ended and the tong war has again begun.

It must not be inferred, however, that the tong typify the mass of the Chinese, who are generally peaceable. The tong seem to be bands of criminals working something like the "black hand" among the Italian population of New York. To show how they work, the Hop Sing Tong has offered a reward of \$1,000 for the death of any officer of the Suey Sing Tong. These rewards are not printed in the American or Chinese newspapers, but are placed on the walls of Chinatown. There is no special animosity against the particular individual.

ALL CAN SMOKE ON MISSOURI.

State Produces 24,071,456 Cob Pipes in 1908.

The statistics concerning Missouri's production of corncob pipes—styled the "Missouri Meerschaum," supply a good pipe story, though it is not a "pipe dream." According to the figures compiled by the Missouri State Bureau of Labor and Statistics for its annual report there were made in Missouri 24,071,456 corncob pipes in 1908, seven factories being engaged in their production. Of this total number 23,268,096 were made in Franklin county alone. In addition there were turned out the same year 415,314 wooden pipes, 1,729,350 extra stems and 149,238 pipe cleaners.

The value of the total product was \$431,810, of which Franklin county county produced \$401,643. The value of the raw material consumed was \$233,688, the capital invested in the seven factories was \$124,547, and the wages paid exceeded that sum slightly, being \$128,295. In the manufacture of these pipes there were employed 303 males and 63 females.

Missouri made enough of these pipes last year to supply one to each man, woman and child in the State, and still have more than 20,000,000 left. Each head of a family in the United States could have been supplied with a Missouri made pipe, the product of a single year, and have left 9,000,000 for export to foreign countries.—St. Louis Globe-Democrat.

Suited to the Place.

"Well, this is certainly crazy management!" cried the chairman of the committee investigating the State institution.

"But you must remember," pleaded the superintendent, "that this is an insane asylum."—Baltimore American.

Tact and Talent.

Talent feels its weight, tact finds its way; talent commands, tact is obeyed; talent is honored with approbation, and tact is blessed by preferment.—London Atlas.

Said Uncle Elias:

"It takes a woman longer to get into her duds to go down town shopping than it does a man to pack up for a six months' vacation trip."—Los Angeles Express.

In order to do a thing once some people have to do it twice.

SHEAR NONSENSE

He—What did you discuss at your debating club this afternoon? She—Nothing. We just talked.

Magistrate—Are you a friend of the prisoner? Busom Witness—No, I'm his mother-in-law.—New York World.

"Say something to the little boy," said Bobbie's mother. "Say, kid," said Bobbie, obediently, "kin you fight yet?"

"I hear you spent your vacation with friends." "We were friends during the first week."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"Are you going to take the late train to Chicago?" "No, the engineer of the train is going to do that."—Baltimore American.

Customer—Give me a bottle of Dopen's Stomach Bitters. Druggist—We haven't any in stock, madam, but here's something just as bad.

"There are two sides to every question," said the broad minded man. "Yes," answered Senator Sorghum; "a winning side and a losing side."

"Why did you leave your last place?" asked the boss. "I got six months off for good behavior," answered the job seeker.—Chicago Daily News.

Prospective Best Man—Got the marriage license yet? Prospective Bridegroom—No; I'm not going to get that until the last thing. She may go back on me.

Bea—So you're engaged? Well, well! As for me, I wouldn't marry the best man on earth. Jess—You couldn't—I've got him.—Cleveland Leader.

Scott—I remember reading of a very rich man who said he'd sooner be poor. Mott—Yes, and probably you remember reading somewhere that all men are liars.

"I can't understand why Brown should have failed."—"Nor can I. I always thought he was doing finely. He often came to me for advice."—Detroit Free Press.

"Did you have a good time at the Sunday school picnic, Bobby?" "I should say so," answered Bobby, enthusiastically. "There was three fights."—Buffalo Express.

"Why, Ethel, what's the matter?" asked her mother, as the little one almost choked at the dinner table. "I got a piece of bread head first down my rough pipe," explained Ethel.

"I never have no luck." "Neither do I," responded the other citizen. "Therefore I keep out of enterprises requiring large gobs of luck to be a success."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

"We," remarked the young married woman, "tried to see how few quarrels we can have in a year." "We," said the old married woman, "try to see how few cooks."—Louisville Courier-Journal.

Judge—How did the trouble begin? Witness—It began, yo' honah, when de chairman of de entertainment committee swatted de secretary over de haid wif de lovin' cup.—Boston Transcript.

Sillicus—We should all strive to bear each other's burdens. Cynicus—Yes, most of us seem to think we could bear each other's burdens more easily than we could our own.—Philadelphia Record.

Bessie—Oh, Mabel! I am in an awful dilemma! I've quarreled with Harry and he wants me to send his ring back. Mabel—That's too bad, Bessie—but that isn't the point. I've forgotten which is his ring.—Kansas City Journal.

"What was the date of the Union of the Crowns?" asked the school inspector and the answer was "1603." "Right. And why was this date an important one for you to remember?" "Because you were sure to ask for it," returned the little victim of cramming.

De Quiz—Did he have any luck fishing? De Whiz—Well, he says he caught a number of fish, many of which would weigh three pounds. De Quiz—Yes, I guess it would take a great many of the fish he caught to weigh three pounds.—Chicago Daily News.

Little Bobby—Papa, did you ever see a cyclone carrying houses around up in the air, and cows and horses and wagons upside down? Papa—No, my son. Little Bobby—Did you ever see a sea serpent? Papa—No, my son. Little Bobby—I should think it 'ud be tiresome to live so long and never see anything.

"You ran into this man at thirty miles an hour and knocked him forty feet," said the court. "That, or a little better, I suppose," answered the chauffeur. "Why didn't you slow down?" "Mere precaution, your honor. Once I shut off speed and hit a man so gently that he was able to climb into the machine and give me a licking."

"Your husband'll be all right now," said the doctor, rubbing his hands with evident self-satisfaction. "What yer mean?" demanded the weeping wife. "You told me he wouldn't live a fortnight." "Well, I'm going to cure him after all," said the doctor; "surely you're glad to hear such unexpected news?" The woman wrinkled her brows. "Puts me in a bit of an 'ole," she said. "I've bin and sold all his clothes for his funeral!"