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**Richard
the
Brazen.**

By **CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY,**
Author of "For the Freedom of the
Sea," "The Southerners," Etc.,
AND
EDWARD PEPLER,
Author of "A Broken Rosary,"
"The Prince Chap," Etc.
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Company.

Continued from last week.
Richard's cheeks, which had turned
a deep and angry red, now grew death-
ly pale as he sank back into his seat
again. In a far shorter space of time
than it takes to tell he realized each
detail of Mr. Renwyck's coup d'etat



"These are foreign drafts. Draw on your bankers."

and its crushing effect upon his father's plans. Then, too, his father's grief was cutting him to the heart. It touched him to the quick; it gripped his conscience with a burning vise. He had come north on his father's business, although not primarily for this deep water harbor scheme, of which he had known little or nothing, and now he was masquerading under a false name and title for his own pleasure. He must perforce be a helpless onlooker while enemies forged a shaft out of parental love and with it pierced the heart and brought about the ruin of his dear old dad. It was unbearable, impossible, yet what could he do?

What would happen when Bill Williams arrived? He, the hapless son, seemed to be in some way responsible for the whole wretched tangle, yet honor barred him from interposing a hand to prevent the catastrophe. Seek it where he would, there seemed no loophole of escape to be found. Perhaps if he could see Mr. Corrigan he could get advice; but, no, that gentleman had already declined to help him, telling him he must brazen it out on his own account. Brazen it out? Yes, but how? Brass counted for nothing now, for Mr. Renwyck held all the cards. Reason did point to one possible course—to hedge on the winning side and save what he could for his father out of the wreck, and at this possibility the young man grasped as a drowning man reaches for a straw.

"Mr. Renwyck," he said, with a mighty effort to hide his agitation, "what you say convinces me. I have just \$100,000—his own private fortune from his mother—in bank. I should like to place it in your enterprise."
The financier started.
"Well," he parleyed, "that is rather a larger amount than I had thought of handling for you. Still, a promise is a promise. Write me your check, Croylund, and I'll bring out your stock certificates tomorrow evening."

The name "Croylund" came to Richard like a blow between the eyes. In his intense excitement he had almost forgotten that he was another man. He could not use the earl's name for this purpose, of course, yet to sign Richard Williams to a check payable to Jacob Renwyck would be to confess all. As well wave a red flag in the face of a furious bull. Again he was experiencing the results of folly, but this time it contained no elements of humor whatever. He was in for it—a maverick surrounded on every side by whirling lariat, and soon a sizzling branding iron would burn its everlasting mark upon his hide.

"Mr. Renwyck," he faltered, desperately casting about for some practicable retreat from his dilemma, but in vain. "I fear, after all, that I won't be able to go on with you. My bankers—er—"

The speculator looked puzzled.
"Ah," he exclaimed, "I think I can appreciate your difficulty. You doubtless bank in England, but that will not trouble us, I imagine." He opened a desk drawer and produced a pad of blank forms. "These are foreign drafts. Draw on your bankers at sight and I will negotiate the paper through my own account and let you know the amount of exchange. You see," he laughed, "I am forcing you into a fortune, as it were. Really, I ought to charge you a commission."
The Texan took the blank draft

handed to him, held it a moment, then slowly tore it down its length.
"I'm sorry, Mr. Renwyck, but—but I can't go in."
His companion eyed him critically for a full half minute. A moment ago he had volunteered to embark \$100,000 in the enterprise, and now he would fain back out. What had changed him? The financier determined to probe this suspicious circumstance to the bottom.

"Why this sudden change?" he asked directly.
"Well, you see," began Richard, writhing inwardly at the falsity of his position, "I've been bitten in deals before, and while—"

"Nonsense!" interrupted the old gentleman shortly. "You can't lose on this. Why, my dear sir, it's a dead certainty. What more do you want?"
"True," agreed Richard sadly, "and yet—"

"There are no yet's," interrupted Mr. Renwyck. "It is not a question of my needing money, for I have plenty of my own. I made you the proposition simply and solely out of friendship, and—"

"And for that very reason," Richard cut in, "I must decline. I appreciate the spirit in which you have tried to help me, but circumstances render my acceptance impossible."

Again the financier regarded his extraordinary young friend critically through half closed eyes.
"Come, come!" he said bluntly at last. "Don't let's beat about the bush. What is your real reason?"
"Do you mean that?" asked Richard, rising to his feet.

"I do."
"Mr. Renwyck," he said in a clear, level tone which was now free from any deception, a brilliant idea coming to him, the more acceptable in that it was strictly true, "you are right. There are several reasons which we need not discuss. I shall mention one which is sufficient, and that is this: You are about to take advantage of a father's love for his son, which has removed an antagonist from the field. Pardon my speaking plainly, but it strikes me as being a rather unfair business method. I prefer to have nothing more to do with it."

Richard wanted a good slap at the unscrupulous old man and rejoiced in its delivery. It was Mr. Renwyck's turn to flush, though the condition was brought about by anger rather than shame. He was about to make a sharp retort, but checked himself and asked coldly:

"Why didn't you think of that when you offered to take \$100,000 worth of shares?"
"I—I don't know."
"Ah!"

"It is sufficient that I did think of it before the money was paid, isn't it?" queried Richard, angry at this monosyllabic comment on his irresolution and vacillation.

"Quite," answered Mr. Renwyck in his most frigid manner. "Yet I think if you understood the circumstances better, Lord Croylund, perhaps you would view the matter in a different light. But every man has a right to his own opinion, and so, if you please, we will say no more about it."

He rose as he spoke to intimate that the interview was at an end.
"Thank you," shortly returned the Texan, "and now, if I may, I will say good night. I regret that I have taken up so much of your valuable time."

He crossed the library, unlocked the door and went upstairs without a backward glance, while the financier sat looking after him moodily. For many moments Mr. Renwyck did not move. His cigar went out and was held unheeded between his silent lips till at last he dropped it into a silver ash tray and, rising, sighed.

"Something surprising there. I don't quite understand. Who would have thought he would have taken it that way? I wonder if that was his real reason. I don't see that I'm to blame. I didn't run over the boy. Well, I'd be a fool not to take advantage of his father's absence. Besides, what difference does it make? He was a goner anyway. It's a life and death struggle between us. We used to be good friends. Is the Englishman right? I wish that—here, here, this won't do! I must go to bed at once. I can't make out that Lord Croylund. Seems as if I'd met him—er—what could be the matter?"

The millionaire paced the floor of his library for a quarter of an hour, then set his burglar alarms and went to bed.

Richard was equally uneasy. He looked at the little pile of Croylund mail that had accumulated, including several telegrams, which of course he had not opened, and decided to take it to the hospital the first thing tomorrow. It was criminal for him to have neglected it and his friend as well. And there were other things he would do on the morrow.

CHAPTER XV.
THE following day was an eventful one for the various members of the Renwyck household. Mr. Renwyck went earlier than usual to the city and in spite of a somewhat uneasy conscience worked conscientiously to the furtherance of his harbor scheme. His triggers were set, and he only waited now for the trap to spring and catch Bill Williams in its full and incidentally the Peace and Good Will genuflection—no, Restry company. Mr. Michael Corrigan was also quite busy during the day, though his occupation was a pleasant one. At least he seemed to derive intense amusement from the receipt of a number of lengthy telegrams from various points.

Richard, too, had occasion to use the wires, but in a different manner. Immediately after breakfast he made his excuses to the ladies and took a train for New York. At the telegraph office he sent out the following dispatch:
Mr. William J. Williams:
Mistake. Am all right and unhurt. Return to Austin at once and watch harbor deal.
RICHARD WILLIAMS.

The young man made a number of copies of the telegram and had them sent to various junction points along all possible routes between Texas and New York, in the hope that his father might be intercepted on whatsoever train he might be a passenger and receive one of them. And in order to make assurance doubly sure he gave orders that the telegrams were to be repeated regardless of expense until the sender had been reached. Richard had a perfect right to say that he was well and unhurt, and in consideration of Mr. Renwyck's method of doing business he persuaded himself that he was also right in adding his noncommittal warning. By this he hoped to put the cattle king on his guard, in which case he trusted to his father's shrewdness to circumvent the enemy.

This duly discharged, Richard called at St. Luke's hospital and was much distressed to learn that Lord Croylund was not doing well at all. He had developed a high fever, and in his present condition could receive no visitors. Richard therefore could only leave the earl's mail, securely done up in a package addressed to Mr. Richard Williams, with the message that Mr. Peter Wilson had called and would come again within a day or two. Then, having nothing else to keep him in the city, after a stop at a flower shop he returned to Irvington.

In the meantime the final rehearsal of "The Man and the Bird" was materially interfered with by an upheaval of conflicting emotions on the part of Miss Imogene Chittendon. By the morning post that young lady received a letter, which she read through several times, then ran to her room, flung herself upon the bed and expressed her emotion in tears and hysterics.

Miss Renwyck, in passing through the hall, caught the sound of weeping and went in to comfort her. She found Miss Imogene in a truly pitiable state, and the better part of an hour elapsed before an intelligent explanation of the trouble could be obtained. Miss Chittendon told her story in jerky, disjointed sentences, so interspersed with sobs and gasps that to quote her in detail would be an utter impossibility. The thread of the romance ran in this wise:

Several months previous to the opening of this narrative Miss Imogene had been a pupil in a fashionable young ladies' school in Morristown, N. J. Like many of her mates, she had carried on innocent flirtations beneath the very noses of certain stately gray headed wardens of propriety harmlessly enough. In her last and most violent affaire du coeur, however, she suddenly found cause bitterly to regret her rashness.

Mr. Roderick Fitzgeorge—the last Morristown object of Miss Imogene's transient affections—posed as a lieutenant in the United States army on a leave of absence, spending a furlough at the quiet little Jersey town. He was of a romantic disposition and appeared a very dashing blade, bewilderingly good looking to a pent-up schoolgirl in spite of a certain physical defect. The lieutenant was possessed of many other accomplishments, known and unknown to Miss Imogene, among which, according to the young lady's own statement, "he could make love just beautifully in the moonlight over a garden wall that was just covered with broken glass and a horrid wire with stickers all over it."

Be that as it may, this Romeo was untowardly discovered in the midst of a most poetical speech across the aforesaid wall one spring night about 10 o'clock, and the touching love scene then in progress came to an abrupt, not to say painful, end. This was caused by the pulling of Roderick Fitzgeorge's ladder from under him by the villain in the piece—the night watchman—who had treacherously crept along the garden wall at the instigation of the protagonist of the drama, the principal of the school, who, splendidly served by her intelligence department, had ruthlessly interrupted the course of true love.

The little drama ended in two more acts, the first a severe curtain lecture and a strict quarantine until graduation day for the fair Juliet and the second a brief hospital scene for the distressed Romeo, who had encountered the watchman's club at the foot of the ladder.

Miss Imogene of course was furious. Therefore she wrote quite a dozen letters to the afflicted martyr, which she succeeded in smuggling to him, expressing her sentiments in far warmer phrases than otherwise might have been justified by the facts of the case. She felt that her youthful heart—the dear Roderick's leg, to say nothing of his head—was broken irremediably, though the human heart requires a longer time to heal than fractured limb or cranium. But time cured both afflictions, and it came about in this wise:

A few days following his recovery Mr. Fitzgeorge left town between two trains. Many whisperings went around as to the cause of this precipitate departure, and many strange coincidences were noted. Among them was the somewhat prominent mention of a merchant's safe discovered the morning after his departure in a condition resembling Miss Imogene's broken heart. Of all this, however, Miss Chittendon knew nothing, and for many

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