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Richard the Brazen

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Continued from last week.

There was some considerable delay
in sending his wife, which he further
lengthened by telephoning to his New
York representatives, making an ap-
pointment with them for later during
the day. As he had plunged straight
for the telephone office, he neither saw
nor was seen by Mr. Jacob Renwyck
when that gentleman, accompanied by
two plain clothes men, got off the rear
car of the same train, rushed across
the platform, jumped into a waiting
surrey, the only carriage that happened
to meet that train, and drove rapidly
away. Nor did he hear several people
inquire of the station agent for walk-
ing directions to Mr. Renwyck's place.
First there was a well groomed, some-
what pompous, official looking Eng-
lishman, with a red face and white side
whiskers, evidently a man of author-
ity and importance. Next there was
a tall, blond young woman, with a
"ripping" figure, who expressed sur-
prise that no vehicle was there to meet
her. And finally there were an excited
old farmer, a hard featured man in
plain clothes—also with an official look
—and a fussy little representative of
a motor company, if one could judge
by his cap and general automobile rig.

In despair of a carriage all of these
walked slowly up the hill in the direc-
tion of Restmore, although in the fact
that, save the farmer and the plain
clothes official, each pursued his way
alone, holding no communication with
the others, was conclusive proof that
their simultaneous arrival and their
common destination were merely coin-
cidence. Mr. Renwyck and his com-
panions arrived long before the others.
With the two detectives he went im-
mediately into the library, where he
met his wife and Mr. Corrigan. The
safe was wide open, showing the tum-
bled contents just as they had been
found when the door was unlocked
two hours earlier by Uncle Michael.
In utter silence the two sleuths made
an examination, but beyond one tiny
scratch near the keyhole of the inner
door the safe showed no evidence of
having been tampered with. Besides
Mr. Renwyck, there was no one else
who knew the combination except the
old butler, who was confined to his
bed with rheumatism in a small vil-
lage several miles away and who was
quite above suspicion anyway. Clearly,
then, the thief had in some way
learned the combination or else he was
an experienced cracksmen.

On hearing of the robbery the first
thought that flashed into Mr. Ren-
wyck's mind was his curious meeting
in the library with his English guest
at 3 o'clock in the morning, with the
window open and the burglar alarm
turned off. The prowler's explanation
had been quite simple. Mr. Renwyck
had honestly striven to persuade him-
self that it was entirely satisfactory,
although he could not drive away a
sneaking suspicion that everything was
not just right. In the light of present
developments his mind recurred to this
suspicion with added force. Then there
was that draft which the earl had not
inexplicably refused to sign after first
offering to do so, a small matter in
itself, yet coupled with the strange
nocturnal wanderings of a gentleman
who wished to seek for a book at a
quarter past 3 o'clock in the morning—
well, it troubled Mr. Renwyck not a
little. All the way to Irvington he had
turned the matter over in his mind,
yet on meeting Lord Croylund on the
front veranda he was forced to admit
that the frank appearing young man
looked as little like a burglar as him-
self.

Mr. Corrigan was the first to give
his evidence. He explained about the
tramp with a cast in his eye and told
how he had first observed the man on
the train coming from New York, then
how the same man had come to Rest-
more begging. He offered to bet his
brother-in-law a thousand dollars to
five hundred that the cock eyed fellow
was the robber, but Mr. Renwyck cold-
ly declined to take the wager.
Mr. Corrigan described the appear-
ance of the man with enthusiastic in-
tenseness, at which the foremost of
the detectives smiled an oily smile.
"Well, by jinks," he exclaimed indol-
ently, "if that doesn't hit Jack Bilbo,
then I'm a outchman! If Jack's got
your shiners, Mr. Renwyck, you'd bet-
ter whistle for 'em."

"Why?" asked Mr. Corrigan.
"Because Jack's the slickest crook in
seven states," returned the sergeant,
nodding vigorously. "He's a hundred
and fifty miles away by this time,
sure."

"But," said Uncle Michael, "if you
had listened to my Jake, instead of
trying to be humorous, you—"

"Oh, shut up, will you?" growled Mr.
Renwyck. "This is no time for recrim-
ination. You'd argue the sun, moon
and stars out of the sky together if
you found any one to listen to you."

"Now, who ever saw sun, moon and
stars in the sky at the same time?"
queried the irrepressible Michael.
"There you go," retorted his brother-
in-law. "Your story of the tramp is
just as absurd now as it was in the

beginning. Come, let's get down to
business. Call everybody in. These
officers will question every inmate of
the house. Gentlemen," he said, turn-
ing to the detectives, "you have my
permission to proceed in any manner
which seems best to you. We are en-
tirely in your hands."

"All right, sir," answered the de-
fective sergeant, whose name was
Flint. "We'll take the servants first."
Richard was crossing the hall in a
vain search for Harriet when he
chanced to overhear this last remark.
His heart went down again. If Wool-
sey Bills were questioned it would
mean far more than turning a guilty
villain over to the authorities. He, the
master, would be forced to explain
also, and, taken in conjunction with
his own meeting with Mr. Renwyck in
the library, the outcome would be
ghastly, to say the least. Yet he must
act on the detective's suggestion at
once.

"Shall I send for my man?" he asked
of Mr. Renwyck, who at that moment
came out into the hall.

"No," said his host; "we'll take my
own servants first. James," he called to
a sphinxlike butler in the hall, "tell
all the servants to come into the lib-
rary—all of them. Understand?"

"Yes, sir," answered James, with a
solemn bow, and departed on his mis-
sion.
Richard's heart went up again. He
had a slight reprieve. It would last
perhaps twenty minutes, yet such
might happen in that span of time.
He wondered idly if they would put
handcuffs on him, but dismissed the
thought in his determination to pay
for the stolen diamonds, inasmuch as
he felt responsible for Woolsey Bills.
When the time came he would confess
like a man and take his medicine. He
would be denounced. It would be
dramatic, like the play of the "Man
and the Bird," only the name would
be changed. It would now be the
"Man and the Jailbird." How simple
to have opened that library window,

while Bills went out into the night,
boarded a freight and deposited the
plunder in New York! The Texan was
innocent, of course, but would other
people think so? Yet she would. There
was comfort in that. If she believed
in him, nothing else mattered very
much.

At this stage of the proceedings there
was quite a commotion on the front
porch, due to the arrival of several
visitors. Harriet and Imogene went
out and greeted Miss Sempton nerv-
ously, explaining the state of affairs
briefly, while Mr. Renwyck also came
to the door, impatient at the unlooked
for interruption.

"Sir," questioned the pompous Eng-
lish gentleman, who had arrived a few
minutes after the lighter footed young
lady, "am I correct in assuming that
that is Mr. Jacob Renwyck?"

Mr. Renwyck bowed.
"I'm Mr. Renwyck," went on the visitor.
"I am, as you see, Sir Rodney Hick-
wick, British ambassador at Washing-
ton. I have written repeatedly on mat-
ters of most urgent business to a gen-
tleman who I learn has been a guest
at this charming home, but my letters
and telegrams have elicited no reply.
I humbly I affudge, sir, to the Earl of
Croylund. Does he chance to be still
with you?"

"Yes," answered Mr. Renwyck.
"Come in. I must apologize for our up-
per state, but the fact is we have just
discovered a serious robbery. I pray be-
lieve me, Sir Rodney, Lord Croylund
was here a moment ago. I will send
for him."

"I shall be obliged, I'm sure. I regret
to disturb you under the circum-
stances, but it's really most important,
you know, and—"

"Not at all," said Mr. Renwyck cour-
teously. "James," he called to the but-
ler, "send some one to Lord Croylund
with this card."

"Yes, sir," answered James. "I think
I see him on the lawn, sir. He's com-
ing now."

Richard, having noted Miss Sempton
coming up the path, had promptly
moved out upon the lawn in order to
postpone the inevitable discovery as
long as possible. He saw her go with
Harriet and Imogene up the stairs;
then he turned once more toward the
house. At the steps he was stopped by
a farmer, the hard featured official
and the fussy little mechanical in-
dividual who seemed to have joined
forces on the way.

"That's one of 'em now," loudly de-
clared the rustic, pointing a grubby fin-
ger at Richard. "I recognize him, offi-
cer. He was there all right."

"What's this—what's this?" demand-
ed Mr. Renwyck, looking out at the
sound of the rustic's voice.

"It's all right, Mr. Renwyck," said
the fussy little man, pushing his cap
"I think we can settle it without any
trouble whatever. Is this Lord's re-
land?"

"Yes, it is," answered the but-
ler, "and the fact is, sir, that the
man who was here a moment ago, I
have just seen him on the lawn, sir.
He's coming now."

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time. What do you want? Be brief."

"My name," said the man, "is Par-
ker—John Parker of the Layton Motor
company. Lord Croylund here rented
one of our machines a week ago and
never brought it back. We learned in-
cidentally that he smashed it up and
failed to report the accident. We re-
quired for him at his hotel, but he had
left without giving an address. We
had a great deal of trouble in locating
the damaged motor, but found it at
last at New Rochelle. And we have
had more trouble in locating him here
too. I have a heavy bill against his
lordship."

But here the farmer broke in angrily:
"Yes, an' he broke up my waggin an'
kilt my dawg. I'll have the law on
him, I'll have you," he cried, turning to
Richard—"you got to come along with
us back to New York! My lawyer says
you've got to pay a thousand dollars
damages. This man has a summons
for you. That's him, constable. Take
him in."

Mr. Renwyck turned to the Texan
with a look of refined astonishment.
"Really, Lord Croylund," he began,
but Richard smiled brazenly and
checked further speech.

"Mr. Renwyck," he said, "I must
apologize to you for this unfortunate
interruption. I did have an automo-
bile accident. It is true, but I paid to
have the damaged machine towed to
the nearest garage and thought, of
course, that the matter would be re-
ported promptly by the officer employ-
ed. I gave my address and heard
nothing further from the owners of
the automobile nor from this worthy
farmer whose wagon and dog were
both butted into kingdom come." Rich-
ard turned to Mr. Parker. "At what
hotel did you inquire for me?"

"Hotel Astor, sir, the address on our
books."

"Ah!" smiled the Texan. "That ac-
counts for it. I had changed my ad-
dress to the St. Regis. Meet me there
on Monday morning at 11, both of you.
The matter will be adjusted to your
entire satisfaction."

"There," said Mr. Renwyck impa-
tiently to the farmer and Mr. Parker.
"Does that satisfy you?"

"No, it don't," protested the rustic
one. "He's a slick one. I kin tell ye.
He didn't give no slich name as Croyl-
und" when he run me down. I disre-
member wot it was, but it warn't
Croylund. No, sir; that man's tryin' to
squint out'en it."

"Get off my place!" shouted Mr. Ren-
wyck furiously, these successive con-
temptrous provings too much for his un-
stable equilibrium. "Is my house to
be overrun by every lunatic in the
state of New York? Take him away,
Mr. Parker, before I forget myself and
have him ejected forcibly!"

Mr. Parker looked doubtful, the farmer
was obstinate, the officer handed
Richard a paper, while Uncle Michael
looked on, rubbing his pump white
hands and chuckling softly. At this

juncture Sir Rodney Hickwick hap-
pened to spy a monocle in the eye of a
gentleman outside. At the same time
he caught the name of Croylund. He
rose from his seat in the drawing room
and appeared upon the scene. He had
been greatly troubled over the fact
that Lord Croylund's plans for pur-
chasing submarines for Japan had
been disclosed to the authorities at
Washington, at the instance of the
Russian ambassador, and unless the
plans were dropped forthwith grave
complications were certain to ensue.

For this very reason he had made a
daring trip to New York to endeavor
to save his fellow countryman's hon-
ors. He had just been advised as he
said to get a reply to three telegrams
and five letters and was the more anx-
ious to learn the result of this impor-
tant business. He was a little sur-
prised, but he was sure he recognized
his friend among the group upon the
porch.

(To Be Continued)

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