

Richard the Brazen

CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY, Author of "For the Freedom of the Sea," "The Southerners," Etc., AND EDWARD PEPLER, Author of "A Broken Heart," "The Prince's Champ," Etc.

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Continued from last week.

"Why, Croyland," he exclaimed, "how are you?" "How d'ye do?" returned Richard audaciously, taking the outstretched hand and shaking it cordially. "By Jove, old chap, I'm glad to see you!" Sir Rodney stared at this strange young man before him, gasped and



"This isn't the Earl of Croyland, Mr. Renwyck."

took a backward step; then he jerked his hand from the other's grasp and turned to Mr. Renwyck.

"Er—bless my soul," he spluttered, "is this the—eh?"

"The Earl of Croyland, of course," answered Mr. Renwyck, striving to control his growing impatience at all these interruptions.

"Of course," said Richard solemnly. "Didn't you just recognize me yourself?"

"Fellow! Chap! This isn't the Earl of Croyland, Mr. Renwyck. He's an impostor, sir. You are being grossly deceived."

If a lyddite shell had exploded on the lawn of Restmore it could not have created a more profound sensation. There were several startling exclamations, short and sharp, then a sudden silence, which finally the farmer broke.

"Dog my cats!" he roared exultantly. "I knew he was tryin' to wuzzle us!" "Come into the house," said Mr. Renwyck sternly, "all of you. We'll sift this matter to the bottom."

The assemblage which gathered in the large wide hall was indeed a mixed collection. Besides the haughty Miss Schermerly and the dismal Mr. Van der Awe, there were one wondering English gentleman, two detectives, a constable, several more or less terrified servants, a farmer, an automobile agent, a lawyer, a financier and a seagoat. This is not counting Mrs. Renwyck, who found herself in a frightened state of agitation which Miss Schermerly could not soothe, nor Miss Chittendon, who was worse off; nor Miss Renwyck, nor Miss Sempton, who was displaying her "rippling" figure from a point of vantage on the stairs between the other two.

"Now," said Mr. Renwyck, facing the seagoat in the center of the hall—"now, sir, pray be good enough to give an account of yourself."

"What would you like to know first?" asked Richard in an exasperatingly level voice.

"Are you an Englishman?" "An Englishman! Well, rather not," sneered the ambassador.

"No, thank God!" came the fervid answer. "An American and proud of it!"

Sir Rodney's face flamed redder than before. So did Miss Harriet's, but hers from a very different cause.

"Oh, I say!"—interposed the ambassador.

"Him English!" laughed the farmer. "Gosh!"

"I knew there was something wrong," began Miss Schermerly in malicious triumph. "I always thought his manners had not the repose that—"

"Silence!" commanded Mr. Renwyck, glaring about him savagely. Then he turned once more to Richard. "You have imposed on my hospitality, sir. Who are you?"

"Now, whom do you think I am?" asked the Texan, with a most engaging smile.

There was silence for a moment; then Miss Sempton spoke:

"Pardon me, Mr. Renwyck, but I think I can supply that information. He is—or says he is—Peter Wilson, chauffeur for the Layton Motor company. He learned to drive a car on a broncho."

"On a broncho?" exclaimed Miss Harriet, to whom an illumination was dawning.

"He isn't," spoke up Mr. Parker promptly. "Seeking your pardon, ma'am,

for contradicting a lady. I belong to the Layton Motor company, and I never laid eyes on this man before in my life."

"Tain't so!" shouted the farmer. "He is Peter Wilson; I recall it now. I heard him say so himself. The lady heard him, too, an' she'll back me up." "Officer," said Mr. Renwyck, with quiet ferocity, "oblige me by putting that man out of my house."

Sergeant Flint complied willingly, and for the balance of the convulse the rustic looked on and listened from afar. When quiet was restored Mr. Renwyck returned to the matter in hand.

"You admit, then, to having sailed under false colors?"

"I do," said Richard equably. "Is your name Peter Wilson?"

"No." Mr. Renwyck's face went red, then deathly pale. He had heard enough. In the excitement of the exposure he had lost sight for the moment of the robbery. He pointed a shaking finger at the Texan and exclaimed in a tone which was loud enough for all to hear: "Where are my diamonds?" "I give it up," said Richard cheerfully.

"That's what they want you to do," interrupted Mr. Van der Awe, with a sudden burst of intelligence, which surprised everybody.

"You've got them, my man," said Mr. Renwyck. "Officers, arrest him!"

"Father!"

Shrill and anguished came the cry, and the desperate Texan's warm blood tingled at the sound. To him it meant one friend at least, no matter what his name might be. As Harriet stepped forward Uncle Michael caught her hand, whispered a word in her ear and pulled her gently back.

"Be careful, Jacob," he admonished. "You are laying yourself open to a suit for libel. If you had listened to me at first, you—"

"Hold your tongue," retorted Mr. Renwyck sharply. "This is my affair."

"Oh, all right," agreed Mr. Corrigan, shrugging as he turned away. "I wash my hands of the matter entirely."

This he proceeded to do, but with the proverbial "invisible soap," seeming to derive much joy therefrom.

CHAPTER XXIII.

RICHARD was not angry at Mr. Renwyck's accusation, false though it was. He had expected it all along and had steeled himself to bear it without the turning of an eyelash. This would seem to be his opportunity for confessing his deception, yet now he was checked by the part the two young ladies had played on the previous night. To make a clean breast of it would be to involve them also, and even though it would clear him personally he could not entertain the thought for a single instant.

Yet when Sergeant Flint, the detective, put forth his hand the blood of the Texan seethed into action. There was no evidence of anger, no movement to resist the law, but in his cold gray eye there came a warning glint, which was further backed by a calm, dispassionate tone.

"Don't do that, sonny," he said in words that carried conviction. "There'll be no trouble. But hands off!" Once more he turned quietly to his host. "Now, Mr. Renwyck, kindly explain your charge."

"It is scarcely necessary," answered that gentleman in undisguised contempt, "but if you wish to be further unmasked before this company I have no objection. I assure you. You entered my house under false pretenses and with an assumed name. By your own confession you have abused our trust and hospitality. I find you in my library at 3 o'clock in the morning, fully dressed, while the window is wide open and the burglar alarm switched off. Can you account for this extraordinary proceeding on the part of a guest in a gentleman's house?"

"I can," he answered calmly. Harriet made an involuntary movement at this, but Richard, whose eyes never lost sight of her, in spite of all that occurred, checked her with a motion of his hand. "As I told you, I had come downstairs for a book. The night was warm, and through the window came a very grateful breeze. If I wished to open a window, why should I alarm the entire household with a furious clatter from a big brass gong?"

There were murmurs of approval from several persons among the company, especially the ladies, but this only made Mr. Renwyck more firm in his just convictions.

"Nonsense," he cried, "utter bosh! Do you mean to tell me that you will swear in court—as you certainly will have to—that you opened that library window merely to let in fresh air?"

"There was no other reason," the Texan answered imperturbably.

Mr. Renwyck tried another tack.

"Was there any other man with you in the library last night?"

"There was."

Imogene gasped, and Harriet put an arm around her soothingly.

"Ha!" cried the financier triumphantly. "Perhaps you will turn state's evidence. Well, who was this other man?"

"You," smiled Richard. "I remember you perfectly on account of your costume, which was—er—quaint in the extreme."

Uncle Michael broke into a jovial roar, while a snigger of amusement rippled among the other listeners. The culprit had scored a point, but it only served to put Mr. Renwyck in a warmer rage.

"Officers," he cried, "do your duty! I accuse this man—he's a thief!"

Miss Harriet stepped forward, a crimson spot glowing on either cheek, but Imogene held tightly to her arm and dragged her back. Mr. Van der Awe was in a state which bordered on despair. He also had been watching Imogene and Harriet, and he saw that they were far more interested in the proceedings of the case than their silence warranted. Three times Miss Harriet had started forward, but her whimpering friend had always detained her, once going so far as to stop an exclamation with a pretty hand across a prettier mouth. What was it Miss Renwyck seemed so eager to tell which Miss Chittendon seemed equally determined to withhold?

At Mr. Renwyck's order to the detectives great excitement filled the room. Sergeant Flint and his subordinate closed upon the Texan, and for a moment it seemed that trouble was inevitable.

"Stop!" said Richard. The tone was incisive, and somehow the wondering company gave obedience. "Mr. Renwyck," he went on quietly, "you have called me a thief before many witnesses. You will be required to answer for this to me! As to the manner of that answer you know enough of men from Texas to—"

This time Harriet broke away from Miss Imogene, whitening to the lips and stretching out her hand to the group beneath her.

"Texas?" she cried. "Then you are—"

"I am," smiled Richard, "and don't you say a single word. We'll get out of this 'mill' too."

Miss Renwyck sank back against the balustrade, trembling from head to foot, while her color came and went, as she stared in silence at the cowboy of her dreams. In her heart she had known it from the first, yet now she recognized the fact that she loved the pseudo Englishman even if he had not turned out to be her hero of the plains. How splendid he looked as he faced the company, striving to shield two helpless girls by taking the blame of the robbery upon himself! For her sake he was being branded as a thief, but this thing should not be!

"Imogene," she whispered, "I must tell. I must tell!"

But Imogene clung to her appealingly.

"Oh, don't!" she pleaded. "Cornelius will be so angry at me. Look at him glowering now! Just wait a little while. I shall die of shame. Please, please!"

Harriet bit her lip. It was too late now, anyway, for her lover was speaking again, and she did not wish to miss a word.

"Gentlemen," he was saying. "Mr. Renwyck has accused me of a crime. Perhaps he is justified in connecting me with the loss of his valuable property; but, on the other hand, I appeal to you as level headed, thinking men. His evidence is purely circumstantial!"

"Can you prove your innocence?" sneered the financier.

"Unfortunately, no, nor am I compelled to do so by the laws of the land," returned the Texan quietly. "But I can weld as strong a chain around any member of this household whom you choose to select."

"Done!" retorted Mr. Renwyck angrily. "Make the choice yourself. Go on."

"Very well," laughed Richard. "I will, Mr. Renwyck, I select you!"

"Me!" stormed the millionaire, starting back in genuine astonishment. "Preposterous!"

There was a chuckle of delight from a distant corner, and Mr. Renwyck had no trouble at all in fixing it upon Brother Michael. Richard stood with his feet slightly apart, his hands in his pockets, while he began to rock forward and backward on his heels and toes. The humor of the situation was coming back again.

"Gentlemen," he said, "and ladies, too, if you will allow me—this is merely for the sake of argument—our honorable host, for whom, believe me, I have the utmost respect and admiration, has unfortunately placed himself in a very ugly light. To begin with, he is involved in a certain financial scheme, the details of which I am not at liberty to disclose. Suffice it to say it requires a vast amount of capital. That Mr. Renwyck is plucked for money is proved by the fact that night before last he urged me to place \$100,000 in his enterprise."

"What?" gasped Mr. Renwyck. "Why, sir—why?"

"Wait," said Richard sharply. "I have the floor." Again he turned to the company. "I declined to invest this amount of money for reasons of my own, though my host was much annoyed thereat."

The speculator, who could not imagine what Richard was driving at, stood speechless with amazement, while his brazen guest went on:

"Failing in this attempt, gentlemen, the prisoner at the bar next looks about him for other means to relieve his need. His daughter is possessed of diamonds valued at much more than the amount required by him. He has these gems in charge and claims to

have put them in his safe. Did any one see him do it? No. Can he prove that he placed them there at all? I think not, gentlemen. By his own admission he is the only person who knows the combination of that safe. He was warned by an eminent lawyer to place detectives in his house and declined to do so for obvious reasons. He did not wish to be spied upon!"

"Bully!" chuckled Uncle Michael to himself behind the shield of a handkerchief stuffed into his mouth. "Oh, bully! I didn't think he had it in him! Go for him, Dicky, boy! Go for him!"

Mr. Renwyck was far too thunder-struck even to defend himself. He glared at his accuser savagely, while his lank cheeks grew paler still with impotent rage.

"Stop!" he shouted. "This is nonsense. Infernal nonsense! What! I steal my own daughter's diamonds? Ridiculous!"

"Can you prove it?" asked the Texan suavely. "If so, the court will acquit you gladly. It's up to you, Mr. Renwyck. Fire away!"

"Well, by Jove!" exclaimed Sir Rodney, actually letting his monocle fall in his excitement.

"How dare you, you villain!" cried Mrs. Renwyck.

"Come, come; we'd better get this foolin' over an' take along our man," said the detective sergeant.

"And he was going to teach me about English aristocracy!" sniffed Miss Schermerly scornfully, suppressing with difficulty a hysterical desire to scream.

"Where is the real Lord Croyland. I want to know?" asked Mr. Parker, taking advantage of the general disturbance to find voice again.

The old speculator was so handicapped by anger at the impudent assurance of the real culprit that coherent utterance was out of the question. He gazed and spluttered in a most incriminating manner, which gave a certain color to Richard's otherwise unthinkable charge. Beyond doubt a stormy scene would have followed had not Mr. Corrigan at last come forward to take a hand.

"Steady, Jake!" he cautioned, while Mrs. Renwyck, appalled at the term after the strain of hearing her husband accused of stealing, burst suddenly into tears, requiring the combined ministrations of Miss Schermerly and the three girls. "Jake" declined positively to be steady, so the little lawyer determined to bring matters to a close.

"Look here!" he shouted. "It seems all of you have had your share of talking. I want to do some of it myself." He turned to the company. "As for my brother-in-law, I feel that I must take his side and declare his innocence of theft. As for this young gentleman, he is equally innocent, though I must admit that he has taking ways."

"Who calls my son a thief?"

With one accord the company turned toward the speaker, and several of them started at the sight of the giant form of old Bill Williams towering in the doorway.

held the truth, after all! Consternation reigned, and everybody began to talk at once, but Mr. Corrigan raised his hand for silence and continued his most effective address.

"You are no doubt wondering," he laughed, "how I happened to come by this valuable property, and I, in spite of our brazen young friend's suggestion, hasten to assure you that I got it honestly. My worthy brother-in-law, who never would listen to any one except himself, declined to heed me

when I told him of a danger which threatened his daughter's jewels. To prove that I was right—as I usually am, by the way—I employed several experienced private detectives and lay in wait for the fun. The first night I was terribly disappointed. The second time, though, I bagged my game. I got the diamonds, gentlemen, and I also have the thief securely locked up in my coach house under guard of the limb of the law who caught him."

Mr. Corrigan turned to his brother-in-law with an irritating grin. "Perhaps you may be interested to know, Jacob, that the man has a cast in his eye!"

The effect of this last statement was striking. Miss Imogene sat up such a wall of anguish that she had to be assisted upstairs, where hysterics of a most pronounced character set in. Miss Harriet unceremoniously left her young friend in charge of the maids and hastened down again, though on the upper landing she was stopped by Mr. Van der Awe, who had followed his loved one as far as he could with reasonable propriety.

"Oh, heaven!" he moaned in his most sepulchral voice. "What—what is the meaning of it all?"

"No time now," breathed Harriet, brushing past him. "Don't be silly!"

That Brother Michael had got the better of him was gall and wormwood to Mr. Renwyck's pride. He was furious with himself and every one else connected with the terrible affair, and in his rage he rushed headlong into another blunder.

"Hold on!" he cried. "You've gained your point, Michael, but only in part. You caught the man on the outside, but I have the accomplice on the inside. The accomplice is just as culpable as the actual thief." He frowned at Richard and continued: "This man is an impostor. He switched off the alarm in my library window, let in his partner in crime and was about to cover up his tracks when I chanced to awaken, heard a noise and came downstairs. I caught him in the very act. I tell you, and the law shall take its course. Here, officer, I command you to arrest that man! He's a thief!"

Richard wheeled upon his accuser, his own anger now bubbling to the boiling point, when a deep voice boomed upon them like the roar of a heavy gun:

"Who calls my son a thief?"

With one accord the company turned toward the speaker, and several of them started at the sight of the giant form of old Bill Williams towering in the doorway.

(To Be Continued)

TEA

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CONTEST NOTICE

Roseburg, Ore., May 18, 1908. A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by HENRY KLOPPER,

contestant, against Homestead entry No. 10,876, made July 18, 1901, for the SE 1/4 Section 10, Township 39 S, Range 8 West, by Robert Ball, Contestee, in which it is alleged that Robert Ball has abandoned same four years ago, more or less, and has not been on said homestead since, also that no other person has lived on same since, nor made any improvements; that said alleged absence was not due to his employment in the Army, Navy or Marine Corps of the United States.

Said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond, and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 15, 1908, before Joseph Moss, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon, and that final hearing will be held at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 25, 1908 before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon. BENJAMIN L. EDDY, Register.

CONTEST NOTICE

Roseburg, Ore., May 18, 1908. A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by HENRY KLOPPER,

contestant, against Homestead entry No. 13,179, made October 21, 1908, for the NE 1/4 Section 10, Township 39 S, Range 8 West, by Edward F. Lemieux Contestee, in which it is alleged that said Edward F. Lemieux has abandoned same; that he never lived on same at any time, nor made any improvements on same; that only a position of land is fit for agriculture or horticulture; that said alleged absence was not due to his employment in the Army, Navy, or Marine Corps of the United States.

Said parties are hereby notified to appear, respond, and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 14, 1908, before Joseph Moss, U. S. Commissioner, at his office in Grants Pass, Josephine County, Oregon, and that final hearing will be held at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 24, 1908 before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon. BENJAMIN L. EDDY, Register.

CONTEST NOTICE

Roseburg, Ore., May 13, 1908. A sufficient contest affidavit having been filed in this office by C. W. PARKS,

contestant, against Homestead entry No. 10873, made July 18, 1901, for the SE 1/4 Section 34, Township 33 S, Range 3 West, by Walter L. Crowe Contestee, in which it is alleged that said Walter L. Crowe has not established his residence upon the said land, or cultivated or improved the same, as required by law; that the only improvements upon said land consist of an abandoned cabin, without doors or windows; and further that said Walter L. Crowe has abandoned said land, having been absent therefrom without obtaining leave of absence for more than six months last past; said alleged absence was not due to his employment in the Army, Navy or Marine Corps of the United States and parties are hereby notified to appear, respond and offer evidence touching said allegation at 10 o'clock a. m. on July 7, 1908, before the Register and Receiver at the United States Land Office in Roseburg, Oregon.

The said contestant having, in a proper affidavit, filed May 13, 1908, set forth facts which show that after due diligence personal service of this notice can not be made, it is hereby ordered and directed that such notice be given by due and proper publication.

BENJAMIN L. EDDY, Register.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

Department of the Interior. Land office at Roseburg Ore., April 15th, 1908.

Notice is hereby given that ALBERT BIGELOW,

of Williams, Ore., has filed notice of his intention to make final five years proof in support of his claim, viz: Homestead Entry No. 10,977, made August 26th, 1901, for Lot 8, Section 29, and NE 1/4, NE 1/4, Section 26, Township 38 S, Range 5 West, W. M., and that said proof will be made before Joseph Moss, U. S. Commissioner, at his office, in Grants Pass, Oregon, on Wednesday, July 8th, 1908.

He names the following witnesses to prove his continuous residence upon, and cultivation of, the land, viz: Frank Topping, of Williams, Ore., Ruel M. Congie, of Williams, Ore., William J. Russell, of Grants Pass, Ore., Dorrance G. Dodson, of Grants Pass, Ore.

BENJAMIN L. EDDY, Register.