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CHAPTER IX—Continued.

"Hiram, I told you had no imagination. Wait a moment. Now, suppose that some strange eccentric chap owns one of these coal limits. He lives up in the mountains, a kind of hermit, but we fall in with him and offer him \$40,000 for his limit, worth, say, \$500,000, or more if you feel like it. He says, 'All right, but mind I want the money in bills, and you'll have to bring it out to me here.' Now can you think of anything?"

"Harris don't know nothin' about coal," protested Riles. "He wouldn't bite at anythin' like that."

"Your faith has been neglected as well as your imagination. You've got to paint it to him so's to get him interested. That's all. Our business is to get Harris, with the money in his wallet, started up into those mountains. It's mighty lonely up there, with timber wolves, grizzly bears, precipices, snow slides, and trails that lead to nowhere, and if Harris is unfortunate—well, he's unfortunate."

The plan gradually penetrated Riles' slow-working mind. At first it numbed him a little, and his face was a strange color as he turned to his companion, and said, in a low voice, "Ain't it risky? What if the police catch on?"

"They won't. They're all right for cleaning up a rough house, but don't cut any figure in fine art work like we'll put over. I tell you, Riles, it's absolutely safe. The main thing is to see that he has the money in bills; anything else would be risky and lead to trouble. Then this fellow that's supposed to own the mine must be kept in the background. We—"

"But who does own the mine?"

Gardiner made a gesture of exasperation. "You don't get me, Hiram. Nobody owns the mine. That part of it's all a myth—a fairy tale manufactured because we need it. But Harris mustn't find that out—not, at any rate, until it's too late. Then if anything ever does leak out, suspicion will be directed toward some mysterious mine owner, and the police will be wearing out shoe leather hunting the cracks in the foot hills while you and I are taking in the sights of Honolulu or South America. We'll quietly make an appointment for Harris to meet the mine owner somewhere up in the hills. We'll direct him where to go, and leave it at that. Of course, we won't go with him; we'll have other business about that time."

Riles looked at Gardiner with frank admiration. It seemed so simple now, and in his growing enthusiasm he felt that he would have little difficulty in persuading Harris to raise all the cash possible and bring it with him. And it seemed so safe. As Gardiner said, the mountains were full of danger, and if something should happen to Harris—well, he would be unfortunate; but lots of other people had been unfortunate, too.

Gardiner turned his team down a side road, forded the river, climbed a steep, slippery bank, and drew up beside a cluster of ranch buildings sheltered with cotton woods and spruces. As the team, in their long, steady trot, swung up beside the stables, an alert young fellow came quickly out and bustled himself with the unhitching.

"Guess you ought to know our visitor, Jim, shouldn't you?" said Gardiner. "Another Manitoban chasing the free land."

Travers at once recognized Riles and extended his hand. "Well, Mr. Riles, we weren't looking for you here, although I suppose I shouldn't be surprised, for there was some talk of your coming west before I left Plainville. How's everybody? Harris well, I hope?"

"Guess they're well enough, but gettin' kind of scattered for a family group. Beulah lit out when you did—but I guess I can't give you no information about that."

The smile did not depart from Travers' face, but if Riles had known him as well as he should he would have seen the sudden smoldering light in the eye. But the young man answered quietly, "I saw Beulah the day I left Plainville, and I understood she was going west on a visit. She ain't back yet?"

"Innocent, ain't she?" said Riles, in a manner intended to be playful. "It's all right; I don't blame you. Beulah's a good girl if a bit highfalutin, an' a few years' roughin' it on the homestead'll take that out of her."

But Jim had dropped the harness and stood squarely facing Riles. The smile still lingered on his lips, but even the heavy-witted farmer saw that he had been playing with fire. Riles

was much the larger man of the two, but he was no one to court combat unless the odds were overwhelmingly in his favor. He carried a scar across his eye as a constant reminder of his folly in having once before invited trouble from a younger man.

"What do you mean?" demanded Travers. "Put it in English."

But Gardiner interposed. "Don't be too sensitive, Jim," he said. "Riles has forgotten his parlor manners, but he doesn't mean any harm. You weren't insinuating anything, were you, Hiram?"

"Course not," said Riles, glad of an opportunity to get out of the difficulty without a direct apology. "No offense intended, Jim. Beulah's all right, an' you're all right, an' that's what I always said."

Travers was not in the least deceived as to Riles' high-mindedness, but he realized that the man was the guest of his employer, and he decided not to press the point. Gardiner and Riles went to the house, and Jim presently saddled his own horse and rode out on the prairie. He had already lunched, and it was Gardiner's custom to cook for himself when at home.

Inside, the two men were soon seated at a meal which Gardiner hastily but deftly prepared. They ate from plates of white enameled ware, on a board table covered with oil cloth, but the food was appetizing, and the manner of serving it much more to Riles' liking than that to which he had been subjected for some days. The meat was fresh and tasty; and the bread and butter were all that could be desired, and the strong, hot tea, without milk but thick with sugar, completed a meal that was in every way satisfactory.

Riles' eyes, when not on his plate, were busy taking in the surroundings. The log walls were hung with mementoes, some of earlier days and some of other lands, and throughout the big room was a strange mixture of elegance and plainness. At one end were rows of shelves, with more books than Riles had ever seen, and above stood a small piece of statuary worth the price of many bushels of wheat.

After the meal Gardiner drew a couple of chairs up to the table, opened a drawer, and produced writing materials. "We can't get a letter away to Harris any too soon. So hitch yourself to that pen there and let us see what kind of a hand you are at fiction."

Riles would rather have done a day's work in the field than write a letter but Gardiner insisted it must be done by him. Much of the afternoon was spent in the struggle, and Gardiner's fertile imagination had to be appealed to at several critical points. But at last the letter was completed. It ran as follows:

"John Harris esq  
Plainville man  
"str I take up my pen to let you no that I am all well hoppin this will find you the same well this is a grate contry their is sure a big out ov doors well mr Harris I think I see something here a hole lot better than 3 years on a homstead homstends is all rite for men that Hasunt got any money but a man with sum money can do better I wiaht I Had sold my plase before I left I could ov done well here their is lots ov chantage to make big money their is a man here owns a cole mine he is what they cal Xsentrik He is a Hermit and lives in the Hills His mine is wurth 500000\$ but he dont no it He will take 80000\$ for it and we can sell it rite away for perhaps 500000\$ I think we should take this up it is a grate chants if you will sell your plase rite away and bring all the money you can then I will sell mine for the baluns be sure and bring all the money you can if you dont like the cole mine there is lots of other chantage their will make you rich and bring the money in bills not chex because He wont take chex becafs He is Xsentrik their is a man here sals His frend in new york would pay 500000\$ for the cole mine if he was here and He is sending Him word so Hurry and let us get holt ov it furst then we'll sell it to Him and make a killing dont fale.  
"your obedyunt servunt  
"HIRAM RILES."

Gardiner read the letter carefully, suppressing his amusement over Riles' wrastlings with the language, and finally gave his approval.

"Now, you must make a copy of it," he said. "It's only business to have a copy. That was a fine touch of yours about going back to sell your own farm. I believe you have some imagination after all, if it only had a chance to sprout."

Riles protested about the labor of making a copy, but Gardiner insisted, and at last the work was completed. The sound of galloping hoofs was heard outside, and a cowboy from a neighboring ranch called at the door to ask if there was anything wanted from town. "Here's your chance to mail your letter," Gardiner called to Riles with unnecessary loudness. "Mr. Riles dropped in here to write a letter," he explained to the rider.

Having with much difficulty folded his epistle until it could be crumpled into an envelope, Riles sealed, stamped, and addressed it, and a moment later the dust was rising down the trail as the cowboy bore the fatal missile to town. The die was cast; the match had been set to the tinder, and the fire must now burn through to a finish, let it scorch whom it would.

Gardiner took up the copy, folded it carefully, and put it in his pocket book. "Now, Mr. Riles," he said, "we're in for this thing, and there's no backing out. At least you're in for it. You have sent a letter, in your handwriting, such as it is, to Harris, and I have a copy of it in your handwriting, in my pocket. If this thing ever gets out these letters will make good evidence."

CHAPTER X.

The Gamblers.

Harris found some difficulty in providing that affairs of the farm would proceed satisfactorily during his absence, but at last they were arranged, if not exactly to his liking, at least in a manner that promised little loss. It was most unfortunate that Mary, in a moment of headstrong passion quite



Riles Would Rather Have Done a Day's Work in the Field Than Write a Letter.

without precedent in his experience of her, had determined upon a visit just at the time when she was particularly needed at home. If Harris had been quite fair he would have remembered that there had been no time in the last twenty-five years when she had not been needed at home, and the present occasion was perhaps no less opportune for her visit than many others.

The hired man, in consideration of having no field work to do, finally consented to milk the cows and deliver the milk daily to Mrs. Riles, who would convert it into butter—for a consideration of so much per pound. To his good neighbors, the Grants, Harris turned for assurance that should he and Allan be delayed on their trip, or should the harvest come in earlier than expected, ample steps would be taken to garner it.

So, with these arrangements com-

NATIONAL FLOWER OF FRANCE

Iris, or Fleur-de-Lis Was Originally Called the Fleur-de-Louis—Valued for Its Medicinal Purposes.

The iris, or the fleur-de-lis, is the national flower of France. It was originally called the fleur-de-Louis. The ancients valued it highly for medicinal purposes. A powder made from the root, mixed with honey, was used for broken bones, and it was also considered beneficial for snake and scorpion bites. A valuable perfume and oil was also obtained from the iris.

The legend as to how the flower received its name goes back to the Greeks. Iris was the messenger of the gods, and the rainbow was dedicated to her. On her birthday, Juno invited all the flowers to celebrate the occasion. They all came in their prettiest frocks. Among them were three sisters, gorgeously dressed in gowns of purple, yellow and red, and who were unknown. Since they had no name, they were called Iris, because their gowns were the color of the rainbow.

Since Iris was the messenger of the gods, and conducted the souls of dead women to their final resting place, the

farmer and his son drove into Plainville one fine bright morning at the end of July, ready for their first long trip into the New West. Indeed, it was Allan's first long journey anywhere; an excursion to Winnipeg at the time of the summer exhibition had been the limit of his experience of travel, and the hard work of the farm had not yet extinguished the young man's desire for novelty and excitement.

Harris got off at the railway station to buy the tickets; Allan went to the post office on the odd chance of any letters awaiting delivery, and the hired man turned the horses homeward. The station agent was threatening his way through his car report, and remained provokingly unconscious of Harris' presence at the ticket window. The farmer took no pains to conceal his impatience, coughing and shuffling obviously, but it was not until the last box-car had been duly recorded that the agent deigned to recognize his existence.

"Nothing for you from—," he said, mentioning the mail order house from which Harris made most of his purchases.

"Well, I didn't expect anythin'," reported the farmer, "although you're just as likely to have it when I don't as when I do. How much is a ticket to Calgary?"

"You got the land fever, too?" the agent asked, as he consulted his tariffs. "Riles went up the other day. You'll be making a cleanup on the cheap land, I suppose. But I tell you, Harris, if I'd a farm like yours you couldn't pry me off it with a pinch-bar. No more worries for little Willie, and I'd leave the free land to those that haven't got any—like myself."

"Worry!" snorted Harris. "What do you worry about? You get your pay, whether it freezes or hails or shrivels up with one of these Dakota scorchers."

The agent thought of the piles of reports on his table, but as he thumped the stamp on the tickets he answered, "Oh, I worry over the Monroe doctrine." He left the farmer counting his change, and turned to his reports. "Another money-grubber gone crazy with the heat," he muttered. "If I'd his wad wouldn't I burn this wire with one hot, short sentence!"

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Operation of Microphones.

The microphone is applied to the detection of fire damp in mines. This is its principle: If sound waves from two pipes of equal pitch impinge on microphones connected in series with a telephone, a clear note is heard, but if one of the pipes emits a slightly different note beats will be heard in the telephone. Here is the application: One pipe is placed in the mine, the other above the ground, and they are blown simultaneously. If the air in the mine is charged with fire damp it will produce a different note from that produced by clear air, owing to the difference of density, and, in consequence, a series of beats in the telephone gives warning of the presence of fire damp. The same apparatus is very sensitive to the presence of coal gas.—New York Sun and Herald.

The Passion for Haste.

A Japanese baron visited the University of California, and on leaving was put aboard a partly filled local car.

At the junction the party transferred to a much-crowded through car. Japanese courtesy weathered the test so far as manners went, but the baron could not resist the question: "Why did we leave the comfortable car for this one, which is so crowded?"

He was told: "Oh, we save two minutes getting into San Francisco." "Ah, said he, "and what will we do with the two minutes?"

Don't get the idea under your hat that other people think as much of you as you think of yourself.

Greens decorated the graves of their women with purple iris.

This flower was widely used in old Egyptian architecture. It signified power and eloquence to the Egyptians, and was, therefore, carved on the brow of the Sphinx, and upon the scepters of their kings.

The Horse of Thirty-Five.

Study of the relation between the total length of life and the time required to reach maturity has brought out an interesting comparison between men and horses. A horse at five years old is said to be, comparatively, as old as a man at twenty, and doubtless may be expected to behave, according to equine standards, after the manner of the average college student following human standards. A ten-year-old horse resembles, so far as age and experience go, a man of forty, while a horse that has attained the ripe age of thirty-five is comparable with a man of ninety.—New York Evening Post.

If riches don't bring happiness, they have at least one advantage over poverty—they don't prevent it.

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BEST LIVE STOCK CHEAPEST

Opinion of Virginia Farmer Who Thinks Breeders Are Aiming to Procure Purebreds.

"From 30 years' experience in breeding thoroughbred horses and later dairy cattle, I have found that the best is the cheapest." This is the opinion of a Virginia farmer in a statement to the United States Department of Agriculture. "I think all raisers of live stock in Virginia are aiming to procure purebred sires."

Good Mixture for Hogs.

It is good policy, where possible, to keep charcoal, wood ashes, slaked lime and salt in a sheltered trough where hogs can have access to same at will.

Silage for Horses.

Silage should not be considered as a mainstay for horses, as its use is preferable only in limited amounts as a small supplement to the regular ration.

Important in Sow's Ration.

High content of protein and mineral matter is required in the sow's ration, because her milk is high in these materials which form the bone and muscle of the young pigs.

Alfalfa Hay Valuable.

Good alfalfa hay is a valuable feed in the suckling sow's ration, and, if available, can well be used to replace part of the tannage.

Maintaining Brood Sows.

Proper feeding and economy go hand in hand in maintaining brood sows through the gestation period.

Purebred Sire Essential.

A pure bred sire is one of the first things every farmer and breeder of stock should invest in.