

# Half A Chance

BY FREDERICK S. ISHAM.

Author of "The Strollers," "Under the Rose," "The Lady of the Mount," etc.

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"Yes; we change beds occasionally," was the careless answer. John Steele sprang from his bed and crept very softly toward the hall. "A new man!" He heard them talking again after a few minutes. He remained listening at his door, now slightly ajar.

"There must be a leak somewhere from the quantity you've burned. I'll have a look around; might save your master a few shillings." John Steele locked his door. The "meter man" crossed the upper hall and stepped, one after the other, into the several rooms. Having apparently made there the necessary examination, he walked over and tried the door of John Steele's room.

"This room's occupied by a visitor," interposed the servant, "and he's asleep now. He wouldn't thank you for the disturbing of his repose."

"All right. I'll not wake him. Don't find the leak I was looking for. Will drop in again."

John Steele, pushing back the blinds a little, looked out of his room. The man who had reached the front of the place glanced back. His gaze at that instant, meeting the other's, seemed to betray a momentary eagerness. Quickly Steele turned away. No doubt now lingered in his mind as to the purpose of the visit.

**CHAPTER XIII.**  
**FLIGHT.**  
STEELE mounted the stairs to the attic. From the high window there he could see, around a curve in the row, a looming figure. Quickly coming down to the second story, he began cautiously to examine from the windows the situation of the house in relation to adjoining grounds and neighboring dwellings.

To the right the top of the high wall above with the customary broken bits of glass; the rear defenses glinted also in formidable fashion. He noted, however, several places where this safeguard against unwelcome intrusion showed signs of deterioration. "A one or two spots the jagged fragments had been broken or had fallen off. These slight breaks in the continuity of irregular, menacing glass bits he fixed in mind by a certain shrub or tree. Against the rear wall, which was of considerable height, leaned his neighbor's low conservatory, almost spanning it from side to side.

"Sure, sir, I don't know whether it's breakfast or supper that's waiting for you," Captain Forsythe's man had

verently, hastily, several pages. Then he gave the letter to the servant for the postman, whose special call at the iron knocker without had just sounded. The letter would have served John Steele ill had it fallen into his enemies' hands, but once in the care of the royal mails it would be safe. If it were, indeed, that person at the gate and not some one—

"One moment, Dennis!" The man paused. "Of course you will make sure it is the postman?"

"As if I didn't know his knock!" he said, departing.

John Steele's pulses now throbbed expectantly. He had obtained a key to the gate and moved toward the front door. By this time the darkness had deepened, and, key in hand, he stepped out.

At first he walked toward the front on the gravel that the servant might hear him, but near the entrance he paused, hesitating, to look out. As he remained thus some one who had been standing not far off drew near. John Steele stole around the place until he reached the back wall.

There he examined his position, felt the top, then placed his fingers on the wall. It was about six feet high; but, seizing hold, he was about to spring into the air, when behind him, from the direction of the row, a low metallic sound caught his attention. The front gate to the Forsythe house had suddenly clicked. Some one had entered.

John Steele looked back. Even as he did so a number of figures abruptly ran forward from the gate. He waited no longer, but drew himself up to a level with the top of the wall. The effort made him acutely aware of his wounded shoulder. He winced, but set his teeth hard and swung himself over until one foot came in contact with the iron frame of the greenhouse next to the masonry. To crawl to the end of the ban-to, bending to hold to the wall and then to let himself down, occupied but a brief interval.

He heard behind him an imperative knocking at the front door of Captain Forsythe's house, succeeded by the noise of feet hastening into the house.

For some time nothing save these sounds was wafted to the listener. Then a loud, disappointed voice, sounding above another voice, came from a half opened window. John Steele stood still no longer. Great hazard, almost certain capture, lay before him in the direction he was going—the street this garden led to would be watched—but he could not remain where he was. He moved quickly forward. As he neared the house, more imposing than Captain Forsythe's, a stream of light poured from a window. Through this bright space he darted quickly, catching a fleeting view of people within, several with their faces turned toward him. Close to a side of the square looking house he paused, his heart beating fast. To attempt to reach the gate, to get out to Surrey road, little doubt existed as to what awaited him there. He remained motionless. Sharp twinges again shot through his shoulder. Then on a sudden he became unmindful of physical discomfort. A plan of action that had flashed through his brain held him oblivious to all else. It offered only the remotest chance of escape, but still a chance, which he weighed, determined to take! It had come to him while listening to the merry

touched his arm as if to take it, of a light feminine voice and an abrupt exclamation of surprise. Walking swiftly to one of the last cabs, he sprang in.

"A little errand first, driver," he called out. "To"—and mentioned a street—"as fast as you can." The man straightened, touched his horse with his whip, and, wheeling quickly, they dashed away.

As they did so John Steele thought he heard exclamations behind. Looking through the cab window, he saw at the gate the company gazing after him, obviously not yet recovered from their thrill of surprise following his unexpected action. He observed also two men on the other side of the street, who now ran across and held a brief altercation with one of the cabbies. As they were about to enter the cab several persons in the party apparently intervened, expostulating vigorously. It was not difficult to surmise the resentment of the group at this attempted summary seizure of a second one of their cabs.

"Those men must not overtake us, cabby. Go where you will! You understand?"

The man did. His fingers closed quickly on a sovereign, and once more he lashed his horse. For some time they continued at a rapid pace, now skirting the confines of the park, now plunging into a puzzling tangle of streets, but wherever they went the other cab managed always to keep them in sight. It even began to creep up nearer. From his pocket John Steele drew a weapon. His eyes gleamed ominously. The pursuing hansom drew closer. Casting a hurried glance over his shoulder, he again called up to the driver.

(To Be Continued.)

**SCHOOL DISTRICT BOND ELECTION NOTICE.**

Notice is hereby given that a school meeting of School District No. 49 of Jackson County, Oregon, to be held at the high school building, in said district, on the 15th day of July, A. D. 1910, there will be submitted to the legal voters of said district the question of contracting a bonded debt of fifty thousand (\$50,000.00) dollars, thirty thousand (\$30,000.00) dollars thereof to be used for the purpose of erecting and equipping an east side school building, and twenty thousand (\$20,000.00) dollars thereof for the purpose of repairing and constructing an annex to the Washington school and installing a new heating plant therein, the vote to be by ballot, upon which shall be the words, "Bonds—Yes," and the words, "Bonds—No." Polls to be open at 1 o'clock p. m. and remain open until 4 o'clock p. m.

By order of the Board of Directors of School District No. 49 of Jackson County, Oregon.

Dated this 25th day of June, A. D. 1910.

ORIS CRAWFORD, Clerk.

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"THERE—THERE MAY BE A SAFER WAY! WAIT!" SHE EXCLAIMED.

reappeared and stood now at the top of the landing looking in at him. "It's a sound sleep you've had."  
John Steele glanced at the clock. The afternoon was waning.  
The servant was now eyeing the visitor dubiously. John Steele wheeled, a perfunctory answer on his lips, and, going to the dining room, swallowed hastily a few mouthfuls.  
He made up his mind as to his course then, the last desperate shift. Amid a turmoil of thoughts a certain letter he had had in mind to send to Captain Forsythe occurred to him, and, calling for paper and pen, he wrote there, facing the window, fe-

voices within the room near him talking of the gay dinner just ended, of the box party at the theater that was to follow.  
Already cabs were at the door. A servant walked out and unlocked the gate, and with light badinage the company issued forth. As they did so John Steele, unobserved, stepped forward. In the semidarkness the party passed through the entrance into the street. Taking his place among the last of the laughing, dimly seen figures, John Steele walked boldly on and found himself a moment later on the sidewalk of Surrey road. He was aware that some one, a woman, had