

Half A Chance

BY FREDERICK S. ISHAM.

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

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John Steele silently looked at Lord Ronsdale. His brain had become clear, his thoughts lucid. He could build up a story, yes, but if he could have known what had taken place between Mr. Gillett and this man a few minutes before, when the police agent had stepped in first and carried here a brief period before ushering him in!

Had Mr. Gillett delivered to his noble patron the memorandum book and other articles fished from John Steele's pockets? That partly opened drawer—what did it contain? The nobleman's hand lingered on the edge of it. With an effort the other resisted allowing his gaze to rest there. He sat down in a stiff, straight backed chair.

"Mr. Gillett, in the garden at Strathorn House," said Lord Ronsdale, "was authorized by me to offer you one chance of avoiding exposure and—deliberately—the attendant consequences. You were to be suffered to leave London, this country, with the stipulation that you should never return." John Steele shifted slightly.

"You did not expect this—quickly—you had not included that contingency in your calculations?"

"I confess," in an even, emotionless voice, "your lordship's complaisance." "And you would have accepted the alternative?"

"Why discuss what could never have been considered?" was the brusque answer.

Lord Ronsdale frowned. "That alternative is still open. Refuse and you will be in the hands of the authorities tonight. Resist"—His glittering eyes left no doubt whatever as to his meaning.

"I refuse."

"In that case"—Lord Ronsdale half rose; his face looked drawn, but determined; he reached as if to touch a bell—"you force the issue, and—"

"One moment." As he spoke John Steele stepped toward the fireplace. He gazed downward at a tiny white ash on the glowing coals. A little film that might have been—paper? "In a matter so important we may consider a little longer lest," still regarding the hearth, "there may be after regrets." He lifted now his keen glowing eyes.

"In one little regard I did your lordship an injustice."

"In what way?"

"In supposing that you yourself murdered Amy Gerard," came the unexpected response. The other started violently. "Your lordship will forgive the assumption in view of what occurred on a certain stormy night at sea when a drowning wretch clung with one hand to a gunwale and you, in answer to his appeal for succor, bent over and—"

"It's a lie!" The words fell in a sharp whisper.

"What?" John Steele's laugh sounded mirthlessly. "Your lordship knows what I mean, how the true facts in this case of Amy Gerard have come to light?"

John Steele's glance was straight, direct. If the other had the paper, had read it, he would know.

"I think you had better tell me," Lord Ronsdale said at last.

even at such a moment, would have helped you. But there was a difficulty. Would the police accept the story of suicide? There were signs of a struggle. At that instant some one entered the house, came stumbling up the stairs. It was the Frisco Pet.

"Joe hurried you out toward a rear exit, but not before," leaning slightly toward Lord Ronsdale, "an impression of your face, pale, drawn, had vaguely stamped itself on the befuddled brain," bitterly, "of the fool brute. You lost no time in making your escape. Little was said between you and Joe, but he proved amenable to your suggestion. The way out of the difficulty was found. He hated the Pet, who had once or twice handled him roughly for abusing this poor creature. You gave Joe money to have the landlady's testimony agree with his. She never got that money," meaningly, "but gave the desired evidence. Joe had found out something."

The speaker stopped. There remained a crucial test. If Lord Ronsdale had the paper what John Steele was about to say would cause him no surprise. He would be prepared for it. The words fell sharply:

"The landlady's son, Tom Rogers, was at the time in the house, in hiding from the police. He was concealed above in a small room or garret. Through a stovepipe opening, disused, he looked down into the sitting room below and heard, saw all!"

The effect was instantaneous, magical. Lord Ronsdale sprang to his feet. John Steele looked at him, at the warring face, the uncertain eyes. No doubt existed now in his mind. Gillett had not secured the paper or he would have given it to his patron when they were alone. That fact was patent. The document was gone irremediably. There could be no hope of recovering it. The bitter knowledge that it had really once existed would not serve John Steele long. But with seeming resolution he went on: "I had the story from his own lips," deliberately, "put in the form of an affidavit, duly signed and witnessed."

"This is a subterfuge."

"It is true."

"Where—is the paper? You did not have it at Strathorn. If you had you would have taken advantage of it."

John Steele looked at the drawer. The affidavit was not there, but something else was.

Lord Ronsdale sank back into his chair. "You have, out of fancy, constructed a libelous theory, one that you would be laughed at for advancing. A cock and bull story about a paper that doesn't exist, that never existed." A sound at the door caused him to turn sharply. Mr. Gillett came in.

"Well?"

"I have here a paper that one of our men has just turned over to me," John Steele started, but neither of the others noticed. "He found it at the last place we were. Evidently it had been dropped by the fellow who was there and who fled at our coming." As he spoke he stepped nearer the desk, in his hand a paper.

"What is it?" Lord Ronsdale demanded testily.

Mr. Gillett did not at once answer. He looked at John Steele. The latter stood like a statue. Only his eyes were turned toward the nobleman, to the thin aristocratic hand yet resting on the edge of the drawer.

"If your lordship will glance at it?" said Mr. Gillett, proffering the sheet.

The nobleman did so. His face changed. His eyes seemed unable to leave the paper. Suddenly he gave a smothered explanation, tore the sheet once and started up, took a step toward the fire.

"Stop!" The voice was John Steele's. He stood now next to the partly opened drawer, in his hand that which had been concealed there—something bright, shining. Lord Ronsdale wheeled, looked at the weapon and into the eyes behind it. "Place those two bits of paper there—on the edge of the desk?"

(To Be Continued.)

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BLACK SAM NOW AFTER LIL ARTH'

Joe Woodman Posts \$20,000 to Bind Match Between Colored Champion and Sam Langford—Johnson Will Probably Ignore It.

NEW YORK, July 7.—Joe Woodman, manager of Sam Langford, today posted \$20,000 to bind a match with Jack Johnson. Heretofore Woodman has posted only \$10,000 and Johnson has ignored it. It is not believed Johnson will accept the present challenge, as he has announced he will rest for at least a year.

Langford has been trailing Johnson lately, much as the champion chased Jim Jeffries. He is eager for a match and has instructed his manager to do his best to secure one.

GOVERNOR BENSON NOT TO RETIRE FROM OFFICE

SALEM, Or., July 7.—A letter recently received from Governor Frank W. Benson, who is now in San Francisco, bears the news that the governor is preparing to file his declaration of intention to become a candidate for re-election to the office of secretary of state.

The letter also says that the governor is rapidly improving in health, that he has not felt better for several years and that he is getting anxious to return to the state. It is expected he will return about July 20, when he will probably resume the duties now being taken care of by Acting Governor Jay Bowerman.

Many friends of the governor in this city had become alarmed at reports from San Francisco and believed he would retire from the political arena this year altogether. They took his request to Bowerman to act as chief executive in his stead as a tacit understanding that Benson had retired from the field.

The letter, however, sets this idea at rest and plainly states that the petition for his re-election will be filed within a few days, probably before the governor's return from the south.

APPROPRIATIONS AT LAST SESSION IN FULL DETAIL

Following are the appropriations made during the session of Congress just ended (second session of the Sixty-first Congress), not counting private claims, which will aggregate several millions more:

Agriculture	\$13,487,636
District of Columbia	10,608,000
Military Academy	1,856,249
Army	95,440,567
Pensions	155,758,000
Post Office	241,000,000
Indian	9,750,000
Navy	136,935,199
Legislative	34,150,000
Diplomatic	4,116,081
Fortifications	5,617,000
Urgent deficiency	5,767,609
Rivers and harbors	51,947,718
Sundry Civil bill	117,468,970
General deficiency	7,847,271
Lighthouses	1,358,559
Public buildings	26,000,000
Permanent annual	\$146,000,000
Miscellaneous	5,000,000
Total	\$1,070,045,796

*Amount last year, and probably larger this year.

MEDFORD BOY VERY ILL IN SAN FRANCISCO

Lyman Orton of Medford is very ill in San Francisco and may not be able to return to Medford for some weeks. It is believed that he is suffering from typhoid fever although when he was first attacked it was reported that he was suffering nervous indigestion.

Mr. Orton made the trip to Reno with the Medford boys but grew worse on the trip, being unable to leave his drawing room to witness the mill.

TEXAS TO LEGISLATE AGAINST FIGHT PICTURES

AUSTIN, Texas, July 6.—Governor Campbell declared today that he will recommend a special session of the state legislature for the purpose of enacting a law to prohibit the exhibition of pictures of any prize fight.

It is expected that the mayors of the larger cities of Texas will take steps toward barring the exhibition of motion pictures of the Jeffries-Johnson fight, following the announcement of the governor's attitude.

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