



The RIVER EDNAH AIKEN

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"I've been expecting you. My wife, Mr. Rickard, and my sister." "Why, what are you thinking of, Tom? To introduce Mr. Rickard? I introduced you to each other, years ago!"



"I'll Take You Around."

her eyes, and had run from it? Should a man ask a woman to give her life into his keeping until he is quite sure that he wants it? He was revamping his worn defense. Should he live up to a minute of surrender, of tenderness, if the next instant brings sanity, and disillusionment? He could laugh at his own vanity. Gerty Hardin, it was easy to see, had forgotten what he had whispered to Gerty Holmes. They met as sober old friends. That ghost was laid.

of a careful home and rigid school discipline. He was ushered into a large cool room. The furnishings he inventoried: a few stiff chairs, a long table and a typewriter desk, closed for the Sabbath. "The stenographer's room," announced the lad superfluously. "Whose stenographer?" "General property now. Everyone has a right to use her time. She used to be Hardin's, the general manager's. She is his still, in a way. But Ogilvie keeps her busy most of the time."

convinced them that the auditor should be here, protect the company's interests. It sounded mysterious, sleuthlike, as if he had discovered something, so they let him bring the books down here. He is supposed to be ferreting. But he's 'woozling.' He used to be in the outer office. Said the noise made his head ache, so he moved in here. All the committee meetings are held here, and occasionally the directors' meetings. Water companies, too. Ogilvie's taking notes—wants to be the next general manager; it sticks out all over him.

room, where other arrivals were tilting their chairs. "The new general manager! Ogilvie wooled for nothing. You should have seen his face!" "Did anyone know that he was coming?" Silent, the tanned giant, spoke. "That's Marshall all over," said Wooster, bright-eyed and wiry, removing his pipe. "He likes to move in a mysterious way his wondrous to perform. (Used to sing that when I was a kid!) No announcement. Simply, 'Enter Rickard.'"

him? But he would not try again to persuade Hardin to give up his trip to Los Angeles. It might be better, after all, for the new manager to take charge with his predecessor out of the way. "MacLean's coming down tonight," he threw out, still watching Hardin's face. "With Babcock."

er. He was never a man to neglect a chance. Nothing came of it, though, and when he reached Glasgow he found his man had died two days before—or been killed, I've forgotten which. Three times Hardin's crossed the ocean trying to corner the opportunity he thought he had found. If isn't laziness, is his trouble. It's just infernal luck.



Hardin Turned Away With an Ugly Oath.

CHAPTER VI.

Red Tape.

At ten o'clock the next morning Hardin, entering the office, again the general manager's, found there before him George MacLean, the new director, and Percy Babcock, the treasurer, who had been put in by the Overland Pacific when the old company was reorganized. They had just come in from Los Angeles, the trip made in MacLean's private car, to attend a director's meeting.

Rickard entered a few minutes later, Estrada behind him. Ogilvie followed Rickard to his desk. "Well?" inquired the new manager. Ogilvie explained lengthily that he had the minutes of the last meeting. "Leave them here," Rickard waved him toward Estrada, who held out his hand for the papers.