

The Real Man

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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J. MONTAGUE SMITH, LATE OF LAWRENCEVILLE, DISCOVERS THAT AS "JOHN SMITH," A CONSTRUCTION CAMP WORKER, HE CAN'T CONCEAL HIS PAST LIFE

Synopsis—J. Montague Smith, cashier of the Lawrenceville Bank and Trust company, bachelor society leader engaged to marry Verda Richlander, heiress, is wrongfully accused of dishonesty by Watrous Dunham, his employer, and urged to be a scapegoat for the crooked accuser. Smith strikes Dunham, leaves him for dead and flees the state. He turns up a tramp some time later at an irrigation dam construction camp in the Rocky mountains and as John Smith gets a rough job.

CHAPTER IV—Continued.

"I'm afraid he'd have to loosen up on his record a little before we could bring him in here. Badly as we're needing a money man, we can hardly afford to put a 'John Smith' into the saddle—at least not without knowing what his other name used to be."

"No; of course not. I guess, after all, he's only a 'lame duck,' like a good many of the rest of them. Day before yesterday, Burdell, the deputy sheriff, was out at the camp looking the gangs over for the fellow who broke into Lannigan's place last Saturday night. When he came into the office Smith was busy with an estimate, and Burdell went up and touched him on the shoulder, just to let him know that it was time to wake up. Suffering cats! It took three of us to keep him from breaking Burdell in two and throwing him out of the window!"

"That looks rather bad," was the president's comment. Col. Dexter Baldwin had been the first regularly elected sheriff of Timanyoni county in the early days and he knew the symptoms. "Was Burdell wearing his star where it could be seen?"

The engineer nodded.

"What explanation did Smith make?"

"Oh, he apologized like a gentleman, and said he was subject to little nervous attacks like that when anybody touched him unexpectedly. He took Burdell over to Pete Simm's shack saloon and bought him a drink. Perkins, the timekeeper, says he's going to get a megaphone so he can give due notice in advance when he wants to call Smith's attention."

The colonel pulled out a drawer in the desk, found his box of diplomatic cigars and passed it to the engineer, saying: "Light up a sure-enough good one, and tell me what you think Smith has been doing back yonder in the other country."

Williams took the cigar but he shied at the conundrum.

"Ask me something easy," he said. "I've stacked up a few guesses. He's from the middle West—as the Bible says, his 'speech betrayeth' him—and he's had a good job of some kind; the kind that required him to keep abreast of things. If there's anything in looks, you'd say he wasn't a thief or an embezzler, and yet it's pretty apparent that he's been used to handling money in chunks and making it work for its living. I've put it up that there's a woman in it. Perhaps the other fellow got in his way, or came up behind him and touched him unexpectedly, or something of that sort. Anyway, I'm not going to believe he's a crooked crook until I have to."

Colonel Baldwin helped himself to one of his own cigars, and the talk went back to business. In the irrigation project, Williams was a stockholder as well as chief of construction, and Baldwin had more than once found him a safe adviser. There was need for counsel. The Timanyoni Ditch company was in a rather hazardous condition financially, and the president and Williams rarely met without coming sooner or later to a threshing out of the situation.

The difficulties were those which are apt to confront a small and local enterprise when it is so unfortunate as to get in the way of larger undertakings. Colonel Baldwin, and a group of his neighbors on the north side of the river, were reformed cattlemen and horse breeders. Instead of drifting farther west in advance of the incoming tide of population following the coming of the railroad, they had availed themselves of their homestead rights and had taken up much of the grass land in the favorable valleys, irrigating it at first with water taken out of the river in private or neighborhood ditches.

Later on came the sheep-feeding period, and after that the utilization of larger crop-raising areas. The small ditches proving inadequate for these, Colonel Baldwin had formed a stock company among his neighbors in the grass lands and his friends in Brewster for the building of a substantial dam in the eastern hills. The project had seemed simple enough in the beginning. The stock was sold for cash and each stockholder would be a participating user of the water. Williams, who had been a United States reclamation man before he came to the Timanyoni, had made careful estimates, and the stock subscription provided money enough to cover the cost of the dam and the main ditch.

After some little bargaining, the dam site and the overflow land for the reservoir lake had been secured, and the work was begun. Out of a clear sky, however, came trouble and harassment. Alien holders of mining claims in the reservoir area turned up and demanded damages. Some few homesteaders who had promised to sign quitclaims changed their minds and sued for relief, and after the work was well under way it appeared that there was a cloud on the title of the dam site itself. All of these clashing were carried into court, and the rancher promoters found themselves confronting invisible enemies and obstacle-raisers at every turn.

The legal fight, as they soon found out, cost much money in every phase of it; and now, when the dam was scarcely more than half completed, a practically empty treasury was staring them in the face. There was no disguising the fact that a crisis was approaching, a financial crisis which no one among the amateur promoters was big enough to cope with.

"We've got to go in deeper, colonel; there is nothing else to do," was the engineer's summing up of the matter at the close of the conference. "The snow is melting pretty rapidly on the range now, and when we get the June rise we'll stand to lose everything we have if we can't keep every wheel turning to get ready for the high water."

Baldwin was holding his cigar between his fingers and scowling at it as if it had mortally offended him.

"Assessments on the stock, you mean?" he said. "I'm afraid our crowd won't stand for that. A good part of it is ready to lie down in the harness right now."

"How about a bond issue?" asked the engineer.

"What do we, or any of us, know about bond issues? Why, we know barely enough about the business at the start to chip in together and buy us a charter and go to work on a plan a little bit bigger than the neighborhood ditch idea. You couldn't float bonds in Timanyoni Park, and we're none of us foxy enough to go East and float 'em."

"I guess that's right, too," admitted Williams. "Besides, with the stock gone off the way it has, it would take a mighty fine-haired financial sharp to sell bonds."

"What's that?" demanded the president. "Who's been selling any stock?"

"Buck Gardner, for one; and that man Bolling, up at the head of Little creek, for another. Maxwell, the railroad superintendent, told me about it, and he says that the price offered, and accepted, was thirty-nine."

"Dad burn a cuss with a yellow streak in him!" rasped the Missouri colonel. "We had a fair and square agreement among ourselves that if anybody got scared he was to give the rest of us a chance to buy him out. Who bought from these welschers?"

"Maxwell didn't know that. He said it was done through Kinzie's bank. From what I've heard on the outside, I'm inclined to suspect that Crawford Stanton was the buyer."

"Stanton, the real-estate man?"

"The same."

Again the president stared thoughtfully at the glowing end of his cigar.

"There's another of the confounded mysteries," he growled. "Who is Crawford Stanton, and what is he here for? I know what he advertises, but everybody in Brewster knows that he hasn't made a living dollar in real estate since he came here last summer. Williams, do you know, I'm beginning to suspect that there is a mighty big nigger in our little wood pile?"

"You mean that all these stubborn holdups have been bought and paid for? You'll remember that is what Billy Starbuck tried to tell us when the first of the missing mining-claim owners began to shout at us."

"Starbuck has a long head, and what he doesn't know about mining claims in this part of the country wouldn't fill a very big book. I remember he said there had never been any prospecting done in the upper Timanyoni gulches, and now you'd think half the people in the United States had been nosing around up there with a pick and shovel at one time or another. But it was a thing that Starbuck told me no longer ago than yesterday that set me to thinking," Baldwin went on. "As you know, the old Escalante Spanish grant corners over in the western part of this park. When the old grants were made, they were ruled off on the map with-

out reference to mountain ranges or other natural barriers."

Williams nodded.

"Well, as I say, one corner of the Escalante reaches over the Hopbras and out into the park, covering about eight or ten square miles of the territory just beyond us on our side of the river. Starbuck told me yesterday that a big Eastern colonization company had got a bill through congress alienating that tract."

The chief of construction bounded out of his chair and began to walk the floor. "By George!" he said; and again: "By George! That's what we're up against, colonel! Where will those fellows get the water for their land? There is no site for a dam lower down than ours, and, anyway, that land lies too high to be watered by anything but a high-line ditch!"

"Nice little brace game, isn't it?" growled Baldwin. "If we hadn't been a lot of hayseed amateurs, we might have found out long ago that someone was running in a cold deck on us. What's your notion? Are we done up, world without end?"

Williams' laugh was grim.

"What we need, colonel, is to go out on the street and yell for a doctor," he said. "It's beginning to look as if we had acquired a pretty bad case of malignant strangle-itis."

Baldwin ran his fingers through his hair and admitted that he had lost his sense of humor.

"This Eastern crowd is trying to freeze us out, to get our dam and reservoir and ditch rights for their Escalante scheme. When they do, they'll turn around and sell us water—at fifty dollars an inch, or something like that!"

"What breaks my heart is that we haven't been able to surround the sure-enough fact while there was still time to do something," lamented the ex-reclamation man. "The first thing we know, Stanton will own a majority of the stock and be voting us all out of a job. You'll have to come around to my suggestion, after all, and advertise for a doctor." It was said of the chief of construction that he would have joked on his death-bed, and, as a follower for the joke, he added: "Why don't you call Smith in and give him the job?"

"You don't really mean that, Williams, do you?" growled the colonel.

"No, I didn't mean it when I said it," was the engineer's admission; "I was only trying to get a rise out of you. But really, colonel, on second thought, I don't know but it is worth considering. As I say, Smith seems to know the

money game from start to finish. What is better still, he is a fighter from the word go—what you might call a joyous fighter. Suppose you drive out tomorrow or next day and pry into him a little."

The rancher-president had relapsed once more into the slough of discouragement.

"You are merely grabbing for handholds, Bartley—as I was a minute ago. We are in a bad row of stumps when we can sit here and talk seriously about roping down a young hobo and putting him into the financial harness. Let's go around to Frascati's and eat before you go back to camp. It's bread-time, anyway."

The chief of construction said no more about his joking suggestion at the moment, but when they were walking around the square to the Brewster Delmonico's he went back to the dropped subject in all seriousness, saying: "Just the same, I wish you could know Smith and size him up as I have. I can't help believing, some way, that he's all to the good."

CHAPTER V.

The Specialist.

Though the matter of calling in an expert doctor of finance to diagnose the alarming symptoms in Timanyoni ditch had been left indeterminate in the talk between Colonel Baldwin and himself, Williams did not let it go entirely by default. On the day following the Brewster office conference the engineer sent for Smith, who was checking the output of the crushers at the quarry, and a little later the "betterment" man presented himself at the door of the corrugated-iron shack which served as a field office for the chief.

Williams looked the cost-cutter over as he stood in the doorway. Smith was thriving and expanding handsomely in the new environment. He had let his beard grow and it was now long enough to be trimmed to a point. The travel-broken clothes had been exchanged for working khaki, with lace-boots and leggings, and the campaign hat of the engineers. Though he had been less than a month on the job, he was already beginning to tan and toughen under the healthy outdoor work—to roughen, as well, his late fellow members of the Lawrenceville Cotillon club might have

said, since he had fought three pitched battles with as many of the camp bullies, and had in each of them proved himself a man of his hands who could not only take punishment, but could hammer an opponent swiftly and neatly into any desired state of subjection.

"Come in here and sit down; I want to talk to you," was the way Williams began it; and after Smith had found a chair the chief went on: "Say, Smith, you're too good a man for anything I've got for you here. Haven't you realized that?"

Smith pulled a memorandum book from his hip pocket and ran his eye over the private record he had been keeping.

"I've shown you how to effect a few little savings which total up something like 15 per cent of your cost of production and operation," he said. "Don't you think I'm earning my wages?"

"That's all right; I've been keeping tab, too, and I know what you're doing. But you are not beginning to earn what you ought to, either for yourself or the company," put in the chief shrewdly. And then: "Loosen up, Smith, and tell me something about yourself. Who are you, and where do you come from, and what sort of a job have you been holding down?"

Smith's reply was as surprising as it was seemingly irrelevant.

"If you're not too busy, Mr. Williams, I guess you'd better make out my time-check," he said quietly.

Williams took a reflective half-minute for consideration, turning the sudden request over deliberately in his mind, as his habit was.

"I suppose by that you mean that you'll quit before you will consent to open up on your record?" he assumed.

"You've guessed it," said the man who had sealed the book of his past.

Again Williams took a little time. It was discouraging to have his own and the colonel's predigings as to Smith's probable state and standing so promptly verified.

"I suppose you know the plain inference you're leaving, when you say a thing like that?"

Smith made the sign of assent. "It leaves you entirely at liberty to finish out the story to suit yourself," he admitted, adding: "The back numbers—my back numbers—are my own, Mr. Williams. I've kept a file of them, as everybody does, but I don't have to produce it on request."

"Of course, there's nothing compulsory about your producing it. But unless you are what they call in this country a 'crooked' crook, you are standing in your own light. You have such a staving good head for figures and finances that it seems a pity for you to be wasting it here on an undergraduate's job in cost-cutting. Any young fellow just out of a technical school could do what you're doing in the way of paring down expenses."

The cost-cutter's smile was mildly incredulous.

"Nobody seemed to be doing it before I came," he offered.

"No," Williams allowed, "that's the fact. To tell the plain truth, we've had bigger things to wrestle with; and we have them yet, for that matter—enough of them to go all around the job twice and tie in a bowknot."

"Finances?" queried Smith, feeling some of the back-number instincts stirring within him.

The chief engineer nodded; then he looked up with a twinkle in his closely set gray eyes. "If you'll tell me why you tried to kill Burdell the other day, maybe I'll open up the record—our record—for you."

This time the cost-cutter's smile was good-naturedly derisive, and he ignored the reference to Burdell.

"You don't have to open up your record—for me; it's the talk of the camp. You people are undercapitalized—to hell it down into one word. Isn't that about the way it sizes up?"

"That is the way it has turned out; though we had capital enough to begin with. We've been bled to death by damage suits."

Smith shook his head. "Why haven't you hired a first-class attorney, Mr. Williams?"

"We've had the best we could find, but the other fellows have beaten us to it, every time. But the legal end of it hasn't been the whole thing or the biggest part of it. What we are needing most is a man who knows a little something about corporation fights and high finance." And at this the engineer forgot the Smith disabilities, real or inferential, and went on to explain in detail the peculiar helplessness of the Timanyoni company as the antagonist of the as yet unnamed land and irrigation trust.

Some real opportunities come to "John Smith," but the fear of detection and capture worries him deeply. Some big developments are given in the next installment.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Servants as Hosts.

A curious custom exists in the town of Port of Spain, in the island of Trinidad. Every year the servants, who are all black, give a grand ball for their masters and mistresses. The Princess building, a huge place where all public entertainments are held, is engaged, and everything is done in the best style. There are two halls for dancing, one for the servants and the other for their guests, both of which are beautifully decorated.

The best band in the island is engaged, and the guests are given a champagne supper. Etiquette is very strict and precedence rigidly observed by the servants, the governor's butler and his lady going in before the chief justice's groom, and so on.

SCIENCE BAFFLED BY HUSKY BABY

Weights One Hundred Pounds at Less Than Three Years of Age.

MAULS BIG BROTHER

Moves Buffet or Piano, Rides in Carriage With Auto Springs and Eats as Much as Two Grown Persons.

Philadelphia. — "Billy" McCarthy, Philadelphia's prize baby, is two years and nine months old and weighs 100 pounds. He moves the furniture around in the home of his parents, Mr. and Mrs. W. E. McCarthy, eats as much as two grown persons and has perfect health. Medical science admits that it is baffled by the baby's growth.

Science has put the "O. K." mark on "Billy." It says that he is all right and advises the parents to let him eat and grow. His growth is not due to an accumulation of fat, for he has bones as large as those of a person five feet seven inches tall, and weighing 154 pounds. Medical men say his growth is all right, but they have failed to explain it.

Mauls Big Brother Around.

"Billy" plays with his five-year-old brother Frank and mauls him around at will. He holds Frank on his lap and pushes him around the yard on an "Irish mail." And Frank wears "eight-year size" suits. If a ball rolls behind a piano or other piece of furniture "Billy" moves the furniture, and it keeps his parents busy getting it back in place. He eats meat, principally chicken, steaks and chops. His mother orders chicken for him three times a week. Every morning the milkman leaves four quarts of milk at the McCarthy home.

When the youngster goes out for a ride he sits in a carriage that has regular automobile springs. The carriage was built specially and cost \$42. He is now outgrowing it, but, luckily, he started to walk a couple of months ago. "Billy's" shoes also are made to

order and cost \$12 a pair. In fact, all his clothes have to be made specially. His last shirts cost \$4 each. Then after running up this big bill for clothing, "Billy" outgrows the entire outfit in three months.

His Mind Also Above Normal.

The mammoth baby's mind has not been stunted by his great growth. In fact, his mentality is greatly above normal. He learned to walk quickly when he started, and in a couple of months has become able to walk as good as a child two or three years older.

When he was born in a New York city hospital, August 23, 1914, "Billy" weighed less than ten pounds. When he left the hospital with his mother, three weeks later, he weighed 36 pounds. At nine months he tipped the scales at 89, and now touches the hundred mark. He stands three feet, six inches tall.

MUST CUT OUT WAR TALK

Dispatch Over Alleged Suicide of Kaiser Causes Trouble in a Chicago Home.

Chicago. — "My husband said the kaiser would commit suicide within nine months and I said he would not, and the argument grew so hot I took our six-year-old son and left him," Mrs. Harvey J. Barnett informed Judge Steik in the court of domestic relations.

"The kaiser can take care of himself," the judge replied. "You go back to your husband and if I hear of either one of you discussing the war again I'll send you both to jail."

They're talking about the weather in the Barnett home now.

Bonnet String Hung Baby.

Temple, Kan. — A bonnet string hung Rowena Jazek, nineteen months old, when she tried to climb a fence near her home here. The baby fell, and the string caught on a wire, strangling her.

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Brazil Losing Rubber Trade.

One of the most striking economic changes in recent years has been the loss by Brazil of its dominant position in the rubber trade. Whereas, a few years back, the world looked to South America for most of its crude rubber, it is now getting the larger share from the far East. The Brazilian product is obtained from trees that grow wild, and little has been done toward cultivation of the trees. In Sumatra, Ceylon, Burmah and other countries millions of trees have been set out and are now coming into bearing. This domestic product is said to be slightly superior to that obtained from Brazil, and the trees improve with age. The financial loss to Brazil through its decreasing exports has become a serious matter.—New York Times.

The Hemstitched Handicap.

Oldfoge—Doesn't Swiftpace's wife object to his staying out till two or three every night?

Newfangle—She would if she knew it. So far he has always managed to get home first.—Judge.

Subject to It.

"Is your husband subject to draft?"

"Yes, indeed. He catches cold at the slightest thing."

Many a woman who thinks herself a beauty never succeeds in convincing her mirror.



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