

THE REAL MAN

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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CHAPTER XXVII.—Continued.

"You're out of date," this from the dealer in ranches. "You know the story that was going around about his being an escaped convict, or something of that sort? It gets its 'local color' this morning. There's a sheriff here from back East somewhere—came in on the early train; name's Macauley, and he's got the requisition papers. But Smith's fooled him good and plenty."

Again the chorus united in an eager query.

"How?"
"He died last night—a little past midnight. They say they're going to bury him out at the dam—on the job that he pulled through and stood on its feet. One of Williams' quarrymen drifted in with the story just a little while ago. I'm here to bet you even money that the whole town goes to the funeral."

"Great gosh!" said the man who was crunching the burnt bacon. "Say, that's tough, Bixby! I don't care what he'd run away from back East; he was a man, right. Harding has been telling everybody how Smith wouldn't let the posse open fire on that gang of hold-ups last Friday night; how he chased across on the dam stings alone and unarmed to try to serve the warrants on 'em and make 'em stop firing. It was glorious, but it wasn't war."

To this the other mining man added a hard word. "Dend," he grunted; "and only a few hours earlier the girl had taken snap judgment on him and married somebody else! That's the woman of it!"

"Oh, hold on, Stryker," the ranch broker protested. "Don't you get too fierce about that. There are two strings to that bow, and the longest and sorriest one runs out to Colonel Baldwin's place on Little creek, I'm thinking. The Richlander business was only an incident. Stanton told me that much."

As the event proved, the seller of ranch lands would have lost his bet on the funeral attendance. For some unknown reason the notice of Smith's death did not appear in the afternoon papers, and only a few people went out in autos to see the coffin lowered by Williams' workmen into a grave on the mesa behind the construction camp; a grave among others where the victims of an early industrial accident at the dam had been buried. Those who went out from town came back rather scandalized. There had been a most hard-hearted lack of the common formalities, they said; a cheap coffin, no minister, no mourners, not even the poor fellow's business associates in the company he had fought so hard to save from defeat and extinction. It was a shame!

With this report passing from lip to lip in Brewster, another bit of gossip to the effect that Starbuck and Stillings had gone East with the disappointed sheriff, "to clear Smith's memory," as the street-talk had it, called forth no little comment. In the Hopra House cafe on the evening of the funeral day Stryker, the mining speculator, was loud in his criticisms of the High Line people.

"Yes!" he railed; "a couple of 'em will go on a junketing trip East to 'clear his memory,' after they've let their 'wops' at the dam bury him like a yellow dog! And this Richlander woman; they say she'd know him ever since he and she were school kids together; she went down and took the train with her father just about the time they were planting the poor devil."

Three weeks of the matchless August weather had slipped by without incident other than the indictment by the grand jury of Crawford Stanton, Barney McGraw, and a number of others on a charge of conspiracy; and Williams, unmolested since the night of the grand battle in which Sheriff Harding had figured as the master of the hunt, had completed the great ditch system and was installing the machinery in the lately finished power house.

Over the hills from the northern mountain boundary of the Timanyoni a wandering prospector had come with a vague tale of a new strike in Sunrise Gulch, a placer district worked out and abandoned twenty years earlier in the height of the Red Butte excitement. Questioned closely, the tale-bringer confessed that he had no proof positive of the strike; but in the hills he had found a well-worn trail, lately used, leading to the old camp, and from one of the deserted cabins in the gulch he had seen smoke arising.

As to the fact of the trail the wandering tale-bearer was not at fault. On the most perfect of the late-August mornings a young woman, clad in serviceable khaki, and keeping her cowboy headgear and buff top-boots in good countenance by riding astride in a man's saddle, was pushing her mount up the trail toward Sunrise Gulch. From the top of a little rise the abandoned camp came into view, its heaps of worked-over gravel sprouting thickly with the wild growth of twenty

years, and its crumbling shacks, only one of which seemed to have survived in habitable entirety, scattered among the firs of the gulch.

At the top of the rise the horsewoman drew rein and shaded her eyes with a gantleted hand. On a bench beside the door on the single tenanted cabin a man was sitting, and she saw him stand to answer her hand-wave. A few minutes later the man, a gaunt young fellow with one arm in a sling and the pallor of a long confinement whitening his face and hands, was trying to help the horsewoman to dismount in the cabin dooryard, but she pushed him aside and swung out of the saddle unaided, laughing at him out of the slate-gray eyes and saying: "How often have I got to tell you that you simply can't help a woman out of a man's saddle?"

"The man smiled at that. "It's automatic," he returned. "I shall never get over wanting to help you, I guess. Have you come to tell me that I can go?"

"Flinging the bridle reins over the head of the wiry little cow-pony which was thus left free to crop the short, sweet grass of the creek valley, the young woman led the man to the house bench and made him sit down.

"You are frightfully anxious to go and commit suicide, aren't you?" she teased, sitting beside him. "Every time I come it's always the same thing: 'When can I go?' You're not well yet."

"I'm well enough to do what I've got to do, Corona; and until it's done. Besides, there is Jibbey."

"Where is Mr. Jibbey this morning?" "He has gone up the creek, fishing. I made him go. If I didn't take a club to him now and then he'd hang over me all the time. There never was another man like him, Corona. And at home we used to call him 'the black sheep' and 'the failure,' and cross the street to dodge him when he'd been drinking too much!"

"He says you've made a man of him; that you saved his life when you had every reason not to. You never told me that, John."

"No; I didn't mean to tell anyone. But to think of his coming out here to nurse me, leaving Verda on the night he married her! A brother of my own blood wouldn't have done it."

The young woman was looking up with a shrewd little smile. "Maybe the blood brother would do even that, if you had just made it possible for him to marry the girl he'd set his heart on, John."

"Piffle!" growled the man. And then: "Hasn't the time come when you can tell me a little more about what happened to me after the doctor put me to sleep that night at the dam?"

"Yes. The only reason you haven't been told was because we didn't want you to worry; we wanted you to have a chance to get well and strong again."

"The man's eyes filled suddenly, and he took no shame. He was still shaky enough in nerve and muscle to excuse it. "Nobody ever had such friends, Corona," he said. "You all knew I'd have to go back to Lawrenceville and fight it out, and you didn't want me to go handicapped and half-dead. But how did they come to let you take me away? I've known Macauley ever since I was in knickers. He is not the man to take any chances."

The young woman's laugh was soundless. "Mr. Macauley wasn't asked. He thinks you are dead," she said.

"What?"

"It's so. You were not the only one wounded in the fight at the dam. There were two others—two of McGraw's men. Three days later, just



"How Often Have I Got to Tell You?"

as colonel-daddy and Billy Starbuck were getting ready to steal you away, one of the others died. In some way the report got out that you were the one who died, and that made everything quite easy. The report has never been contradicted, and when Mr. Macauley reached Brewster the police people told him that he was too late."

"Good heavens! Does everybody in Brewster think I'm dead?"

Nearly everybody. But you needn't look so horrified. You're not dead, you know; and there were no errors in the newspapers, or anything like that."

"The man got upon his feet rather unsteadily.

"That's the limit," he said definitely. "I'm a man now, Corona; too much of a man, I hope, to hide behind another man's grave. I'm going back to Brewster, today!"

The young woman made a quaint little grimace at him. "How are you going to get there?" she asked. "It's twenty miles, and the walking is awfully bad—in spots."

"But I must go. Can't you see what everybody will say of me—that I was too cowardly to face the music when my time came? Nobody will believe that I wasn't a consenting party to this hide-away!"

"Sit down," she commanded calmly; and when he obeyed: "From day to day, since I began coming out here, John, I've been trying to rediscover the man whom I met just once, one evening over a year ago, at Cousin Adda's house in Guthrieville: I can't find him—he's gone."

"Corona!" he said. "Then you recognized me?"

"Not at first. But after a while things began to come back; and what you told me—about Miss Richlander, you know, and the hint you gave me of your trouble—did the rest."

"Then you knew—or you thought—I was a criminal?"

She nodded, and her gaze was resting upon the nearby gravel heaps. "Cousin Adda wrote me. But that made no difference. I didn't know whether you had done the things they said you had, or not. What I did know was that you had broken your shackles in some way and were trying to get free. You were, weren't you?"

"I suppose so; in some blind fashion. But it is you who have set me free, Corona. It began that night in Guthrieville when I stole one of your gloves; it wasn't anything you said; it was what you so evidently believed and lived. And out here: I was simply a raw savage when you first saw me. I had tumbled headlong into the abyss of the new and the elemental, and if I am trying to scramble out now on the side of honor and clean manhood, it is chiefly because you have shown me the way."

"When did I ever, John?"—with an up-glance of the gray eyes that was almost wistful.

"Always, and with a wisdom that makes me almost afraid of you. For example, there was the night when I was fairly on the edge of letting Jibbey stay in the mine and go mad if he wanted to; you lashed me with the one word that made me save his life instead of taking it. How did you know that was the one word to say?"

"How do we know anything?" she inquired softly. "The moment brings its own inspiration. It broke my heart to see what you could be, and to think that you might not be it, after all. But I came out here this morning to talk about something else. What are you going to do when you are able to leave Sunrise Gulch?"

"There is one straightforward thing there is for me to do. I shall go back to Lawrenceville and take my medicine."

"And after that?"

"That is for you to say, Corona. Would you marry a convict?"

"You are not guilty."

"That is neither here nor there. They will probably send me to prison, just the same, and the stigma will be mine to wear for the remainder of my life. I can wear it now, thank God! But to pass it on to you—and to your children, Corona, if I could get my own consent to that, you couldn't get yours."

"Yes, I could, John; I got it the first time colonel-daddy brought me out here and let me see you. You were out of your head, and you thought you were talking to Billy Starbuck—in the automobile on the night when you were going with him to the fight at the dam. It made me go down on my two knees, John, and kiss your poor, hot hands."

He slipped his one good arm around her and drew her close.

"Now I can go back like a man and fight it through to the end," he exclaimed soberly. "Jibbey will take me; I know he is wearing himself out trying to make me believe that he can wait, and that Verda understands, though he won't admit it. And when it is all over, when they have done their worst to me—"

With a quick little twist she broke away from the encircling arm.

"John, dear," she said, and her voice was trembling between a laugh and a sob. "I'm the wickedest, wickedest woman that ever lived and breathed—and the happiest! I knew what you would do, but I couldn't resist the temptation to make you say it. Listen: this morning colonel-daddy got a night-letter from Billy Starbuck. You have been wondering why Billy never came out here to see you—it was because he and Mr. Stillings have been in Lawrenceville, trying to clear you,

They are there now, and the wire says that Watrous Dunham has been arrested and that he has broken down and confessed. You are a free man, John; you—"

The grass-cropping pony had widened its circle by a full yard, and the westward-pointing shadows of the firs were growing shorter and more clearly defined as the August sun swung higher over the summits of the eastern Timanyoni. For the two on the house bench, time, having all its interspaces filled with beatific silences, had no measure that was worth recording. In one of the more coherent intervals it was the man who said: "Some things in this world are very wonderful, Corona. We call them happenings, and try to account for them



"Go Back Like a Man and Fight."

as we may by the laws of chance. Was it chance that threw us together at your cousin's house in Guthrieville a year ago last June?"

She laughed happily. "I suppose it was—though I'd like to be romantic enough to believe that it wasn't."

"Debritt would say that it was the Absolute Ego," he said, half-musingly. "And who is Mr. Debritt?"

"He is the man I dined with on my last evening in Lawrenceville. He had been joking me about my various little smugnesses—good job, good clothes, easy life, and all that, and he wound up by warning me to watch out for the Absolute Ego."

"What is the Absolute Ego?" she asked dutifully.

John Montague Smith, with his curling yellow beard three weeks untrimmed, with his clothes dressing the part of a neglected camper, and with a steel-jacketed bullet trying to encyst itself under his right shoulder blade, grinned exultantly.

"Debritt didn't know, himself; but I know now: it's the primitive man-soul; the 'I' that is able to refuse to be bound down and tied by environment or habit or petty conventions, or any of the things we misname 'limitations.' It's asleep in most of us; it wasn't asleep in me. You made it sit up and rub its eyes for a minute or two that evening in Guthrieville, but it dozed off again, and there had to be an earthquake at the last to shake it alive. Do you know the first thing it did when it took hold again and began to drive?"

"No."

"Here is where the law of chances falls to pieces, Corona. Without telling me anything about it, this newly emancipated man-soul of mine made a bee-line for the only Absolute Ego woman it had ever known. And it found her."

Again the young woman laughed happily. "If you are going to call me names, Ego-man, you'll have to make it up to me some other way," she said.

Whereupon, the moment being strictly elemental and sacred to demonstrations of the absolute, he did.

(THE END.)

World's Biggest Fish Net.
The largest fish net in the world will soon be in use in these waters, says the Avalon Islander. It is 8,400 feet long, 300 feet deep and has five purselike pockets made of a two-inch re-enforced mesh. Two 80-foot tugs and a fleet of small boats will accompany the net. The equipment will cost almost \$100,000 to fish for three months. What chance for its life will any fish have with such a net coming the channel day and night?

Diet a Matter of Habit.
Our daily food is to a large extent a matter of prejudice and habit. We think we must have certain things because we always have had them. But the war has shown us that by the exercise of intelligent planning we can get the necessary nutriment for less money than we have been accustomed to spend.—Kansas City Star.

Important Point.
She—Would you marry a woman who had sued another man for breach of promise?
He—How much did the court award you?

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By REV. P. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (Copyright, 1917, Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 28

EZRA RETURNING FROM BABYLON.

LESSON TEXT—Ezra 8:15-36. GOLDEN TEXT—The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him.—Ezra 8:22.

An interval of some fifty years intervenes between the dedication of the temple and the journey of Ezra to Palestine. Some stirring events in the world occurred in this time which greatly helped the Jews. It was during this time that the episode of Esther's being made queen and the elevation of Mordecai occurred, which favorably disposed the Persian government toward the Jews. The time was auspicious for Ezra to make his request unto Artaxerxes. The supreme aim of Ezra was the restoration of the true worship of Jehovah, for it is evident that the work done by Zerubbabel had largely failed of its aim. In order that Ezra might be an efficient instrument in the hands of God for the accomplishment of this purpose, he "prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it, and to teach in Israel the statutes and judgments" (7:10). There are three stages in the experience of every true teacher. First: to seek the law of the Lord. Second: to do it. Third: to teach it to others. The last is impossible without the first two.

The royal commission granted to Ezra embraced—

(1) The return of all whose free will prompted them to do so (7:13).

(2) Ezra's being given magisterial authority over the district "beyond the river" (7:25, 26).

(3) Exemption from taxation to the Levites (7:24).

(4) Conveyance of offerings from the king and his officers (7:15, 19).

I. Register of Ezra's Companions (1-14). Doubtless this is a representative list of those who joined Ezra. There is clear implication that the twelve tribes are represented among those who returned. (See 2:70; 6:16, 17.)

II. Ezra Sends to Iddo for Ministers for the Temple Service (vv. 15-20). Before the journey to Palestine was actually begun, Ezra gathered about him his companions who were to accompany him, to see whether they were representative. In this review he discovered that none of the sons of Levi were in the company. So he sent chief men to Iddo, who was doubtless the president of the school of the Levites, for ministers for God's house. In response to this appeal, 38 Levites and 220 Nethinims joined him.

III. Ezra Seeking the Guidance of the Lord (vv. 21-23). The journey was full of deadly perils. It lay through a region invested with Bedouin marauders. Ezra, fully conscious of these, and ashamed to ask help of the king, proclaimed a fast, in which in deep humiliation they sought the guidance and protection of God. This is a fine illustration of the independence, and yet dependence, of the men who fully trust God. His chief concern was for the honor of God's name. He had so confidently and repeatedly spoken to the king of the divine sufficiency that now to have asked for a guard of soldiers would cause him to blush with shame. In this critical hour they committed themselves to the care of Him who keepeth Israel. We should begin every journey, every undertaking, every new piece of work, every new day by seeking the direction of God. No friendship or business interest ever reaches its best unless God's hand be in it and upon it. We should not go anywhere, engage in any business or have any friendship upon which we may not ask God's blessing and aid. They sought this for themselves, for their children, and all their substance. They knew that as soon as they made God first his blessing would be upon them, and as soon as they forsook him his power would be withdrawn and his wrath would be upon them.

IV. The Treasure Committed to Twelve Priests (vv. 24-30). Combined with their faith in God, we find practical business sense. Honest, trusted, worthy, good men were selected (v. 28). To such only should be intrusted the Lord's money—gifts offered freely to the Lord by his people. Again, the money was carefully counted and weighed, and the amount set down. The men were held accountable at the end of the journey for everything intrusted to them. Men ought to be held to strict account for everything intrusted to them, to the very last cent. The men to whom this was intrusted were holy; the gifts were God's; they did not belong to any man; they were charged with the obligation to deliver these gifts before the chief priests.

V. The Safe Arrival at Jerusalem (vv. 31-36). The journey lasted four months. They carried with them millions of dollars' worth of treasure, through a region infested with marauding Bedouins, yet God delivered them from their hands. At the end of the journey they testified to the faithfulness of God in bringing them safely on (v. 31). The safe arrival at the end of each day's journey is due to the good hand of our God upon us. After resting three days, the treasure was brought into the temple and burnt offerings were made before the Lord Jehovah.

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Lack of Restraint.
Senator Chamberlain, defending the food control bill, said in Washington: "How unmeasured the attacks on this excellent bill have been! Now, I am like the boy at the movies. I like measure and restraint."
"Two boys at the movies saw a tragic picture play, and one of them was overcome. He took out his handkerchief and wept and sobbed."
"Why, Bill, you're blubbering!" said the other boy.
"Well," sobbed Bill, "I like to see a person show a little feeling!"
"Feelin'!" said the first boy. "Feelin's all right, but ye don't need to wash yer face in it!"

WOMEN SUFFERERS NEED SWAMP-ROOT

Thousands upon thousands of women have kidney and bladder trouble and never suspect it.

Women's complaints often prove to be nothing else but kidney trouble, or the result of kidney or bladder disease. If the kidneys are not in a healthy condition, they may cause the other organs to become diseased.

You may suffer a great deal with pain in the back, headache, loss of ambition, nervousness and may be despondent and irritable.

Don't delay starting treatment. Dr. Kilmer's Swamp-Root, a physician's prescription, obtained at any drug store, restores health to the kidneys and is just the remedy needed to overcome such conditions.

Get a medium or large bottle immediately from any drug store.

However, if you wish first to test this great preparation send ten cents to Dr. Kilmer & Co., Binghamton, N. Y., for a sample bottle. When writing be sure and mention this paper. Adv.

WOMEN SLOWER THAN MEN

Double the Number Required in New York Banks, But They Are More Methodical.

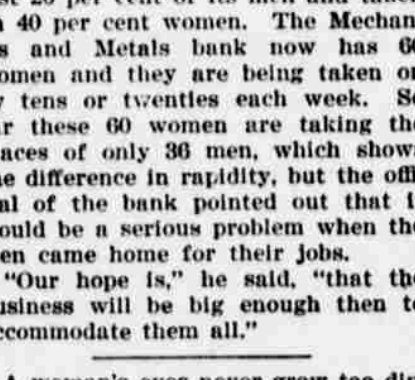
There is at present no woman officer of a New York city bank, and only one in New Jersey, but if the war lasts long enough it may well be, as it is in Canada now, that the banks will virtually be run by women. Already, it is estimated, 20,000 women have been taken on in the Wall street district since the United States entered the war last April, says the New York Evening Post.

Women are slower, but more careful, said an official of the Mechanics and Metals bank, so, although twice as many women as men are needed to do the same amount of work, the bank loses no money on extra salaries, because the women save hundreds of dollars which had to be paid to the clearing house for the men's mistakes. Each mistake costs \$1 and the records show that sometimes men's mistakes cost \$25 or \$30 a week.

The average downtown bank has lost 20 per cent of its men and taken on 40 per cent women. The Mechanics and Metals bank now has 60 women and they are being taken on by tens or twenties each week. So far these 60 women are taking the places of only 36 men, which shows the difference in rapidity, but the official of the bank pointed out that it would be a serious problem when the men came home for their jobs.

"Our hope is," he said, "that the business will be big enough then to accommodate them all."

A woman's eyes never grow too dim to detect the paint on another's face.



Boys & Girls THRIVE on the easily digested wheat and barley food Grape-Nuts There's a Reason