

that you have given up too easily." "I wish people would mind their own business!"

"Mr. Benedict—just what is the matter? Do you really lack the nerve? Is that it?"

"Maybe it's the cowardice of wisdom," he returned, softened somewhat. "Lack of money makes cowards of the strongest men at times."

"Is it really money?"

"Yes, it's money."

"You mean money for your personal expenses while fighting Bird?"

"Money for attorneys, money for the bond I'd have to give, money, money, money at every turn of the road."

She meditated. Perhaps she had been hard on him.

"Oh, well," she laughed, "forget it for a few hours, Mr. Benedict. Maybe I can think up some way to help you."

With scarcely a good night, he left her.

The situation continued without change for some weeks. Rumors came that affairs were going from bad to worse in the pulp company. Bird fought with his best foremen and lost them. The one-idea manager tried to do all the detail work himself, with consequent injury to the business. He lost several important contracts, and three of the company's warehouses were stored with pulp improperly made, which sooner or later must be beaten over again.

The day when most of old Peter Gates' former employes struck at the pulp mill, June Farley sought action by a drastic maneuver. In an otherwise empty office she called to George as he was going out for lunch.

"Well, what is it?" he asked petulantly.

June opened the left-hand top drawer of her desk, picked up something lying there.

"You remember the talk we had the evening of July Fourth on my front steps?"

"Of course I remember."

"You intimated that if you had, the money to finance yourself, you might start something. Well take this—and go to it!"

George glanced down. In her hand were two packets of new, crisp bank notes. Each was banded tightly with a strip of salmon-colored paper. And on each strip was rubber-stamped: "\$100."

Benedict gasped.

"What is it? Where did you get it?"

"Never mind where I got it. It's money and it will help you."

Two hundred dollars. To fight old Jonas Bird and secure control of the Gates Pulp and Paper company! It would have been ludicrous—if it had been less pathetic.

"I—can't take your money," he said huskily. "What sort of chap do you think I am, anyhow?"

"That's just what I'm trying to find out. I'm interested to know if money is really stopping you or whether you're only using the lack of it as a dodge?"

"Indeed? But—but what do you think I could accomplish with a mere two hundred dollars?"

It was cruel, for the sum was evidently all the girl could spare. And to her it was quite a sum indeed.

"I see," she said, as her face flamed. Then you might take it—if it were more."

"I haven't said so. I merely asked a question."

As he stood looking down into her face, he saw her eyes stream tears. Slowly she turned away.

"Then you are hopeless, after all. And I've been believing in you, all along. It's not accepting this money that would make me think less of you; it's in refusing it," she told him. It was with an effort that she controlled her voice. "Nobody would ever know about it—surely you don't think me cheap enough to advertise it. Ever since you got your place here, I've tried to make you see how foolish and afraid you've been. But you're one of those men who don't deserve help."

His face was strangely bloodless as he said: "So you think I'm no good, do you?"

"What else can I think? The first thing a woman admires in a man is courage. You haven't shown enough to cover a pinpoint."

George Benedict's teeth came suddenly together with a snap.

"Give me the money," he ordered. "You've made this whole thing a bit too personal. So I haven't enough courage to cover a pinpoint, haven't I? We'll see. And before I'm done, Miss Butinsky, I'll make you eat crow!"

George went out into Main street and walked and walked.

Early the next morning he showed up at the People's National bank. He deposited that \$200 in his own name, but he stored the passbook away in an inner pocket as a treat.

With the money thus safely disposed of, he turned toward the front of the bank. Judge Farmer, the president, could be seen at his desk through the open door of the corner room. George beared the old financier in his den.

On the following Monday morning, Mike Flaherty, janitor at the pulp mill offices, was sweeping out about 7 o'clock when he glanced up to see Benedict enter from the rear shipping room door.

"Are you back here to work?" demanded Mike. "Everybody thought you had quit."

"I've been away on a sort of vacation, Mike. I'm back now as manager."

"Glory be!" cried the emotional Celt. "Maybe the boys won't be glad to hear that, Georgie. Old Bird's a skunk; is he fired?"

"He is."

"What did he say when he was canned?"

"He hasn't said anything yet. As a matter of fact he doesn't know it."

"Don't know it! When's he goin' to 'arn'?"

"When he comes in this morning."

The Irishman grinned. Benedict passed on into Jonas Bird's private office. Mike departed to spread the news through the mill.

Benedict entered the room formerly occupied by old Peter Gates and himself. The young man had a key to Bird's desk. He inserted it and rolled up the top. Then he started in to clean the desk of all the accumulated impedimenta belonging to the said Bird, business and personal, all and sundry.

He was so employed when Miss Hallett, the stenographer Bird had hired upon his assumption of the management, entered the offices by the front door. She had supplanted Mildred Rivers, who had been old Peter's faithful secretary. Miss Hallett was a big, flashily dressed blonde. She saw the door of Bird's private office ajar and heard the tearing of papers from within.

"Hello, dearie," she called, the office being otherwise empty. And she began primping before the washstand.

"Good morning," came a strange voice in reply.

The woman turned in confusion to behold a tall young man regarding her from the private office doorway.

"You!" she cried. "What are you doing in Mr. Bird's private office?"

"Cleaning it out," responded Benedict, curtly.

"What's happened to Mr. Bird?"

"He's canned."

But I saw Mr. Bird last night, and he said nothing about—"

"Perhaps not. I'm managing this business this morning, however. I might as well tell you now as later that Miss Rivers is coming back this afternoon, and your own services will no longer be required."

"You didn't hire me, and you can't fire me. I won't go until I'm turned off by Mr. Bird himself."

"It's immaterial to me. Only there will be no pay check coming to you next Saturday afternoon."

"I'll see Mr. Bird about this."

"Go ahead. I merely mentioned Miss Rivers' return to save you embarrassment later in the day."

From the inner room came the tearing and crumpling of more papers.

One by one, the remainder of the office employes drifted in. They did not go quietly to their desks. The Hallett person saw to that. She was a wronged woman and discoursed loudly upon the wrong.

Having finished the cleaning of the desk, Benedict stepped to the

door and politely ordered the employes to their desks. A tall, thin shipping clerk stepped forward.

"By what authority are you talking Mr. Bird's place?" he demanded.

"I'm suggesting you leave that to Mr. Bird and myself and go on with the day's work," was the sharp retort.

"Is that a threat?" demanded the young man.

"That's an order," George corrected. "And those who refuse to obey my orders are fired. Do you want it plainer than that? If you do, say so!"

It was a few minutes past o'clock when Jonas Bird entered the office. His favorites surged forward.

"What right has he got to take your place?" they cried.

"He?" stammered Jonas. "Who do you mean, he?"

"George Benedict—the fellow who quit here in May."

"Where is he?"

"In your private office."

Bird had reached the threshold. Bue he paused there.

"Whatever you doing here?" he roared at Benedict.

George gave a careless glance over his shoulder.

"Oh, it's you—Mr. Bird. Good morning. Fine day outside, isn't it?"

"What does this mean?" cried Bird. "Answer me before I send for the police."

"I hardly think I'd send for the police, Mr. Bird—not if I were consulting my own interests."

Benedict was cool.

"Why shouldn't I send for the police? What right have you got here, anyway?"

"There were many things here in the mill not going as well as might be desired. I decided to assume the place Mr. Gates would want me to assume if he were alive."

Behind Bird, peering over his shoulders, the office employes grouped themselves.

"Get out of here, all of you!" roared Bird. Then to Benedict: "And you get out of here along with them!"

"You're wasting my time and your own, Mr. Bird. Nothing doing," said George.

"Send for Chief Hogan!" roared Bird over his shoulder.

"Just one moment, Mr. Bird. If you ordered Mr. Hogan to arrest me and he was so thoughtless as to comply, it might involve him in an ugly difficulty. Hogan has property which I might attach for damages, though you have not."

"Damages? What damages could you have coming to you?"

"Read the bylaws of this corporation. I'm a stockholder here. I've a perfect right on the company's property, anywhere I wish to go, at any time of the day or night. Get that? Likewise I've a perfect right to inspect all the books and records of this business whenever I like, and otherwise deport myself as though I were one of its owners—

which I am. You own no stock in this company. You're merely an employe hired for a specified salary. And it's customary in business, Mr. Bird, for the employer to be above the employe. There's the telephone. Call any attorney and find out."

Bird whirled on the curious employes and closed the door in their faces.

Alone with George, the manager began removing his hat and coat.

"I wouldn't take off my hat and coat, Mr. Bird," George advised. "You're not going to stay, you know."

"Who says I'm not?"

"I say so—as one of your employes."

"You're not the whole board. I was hired by a majority of the stockholders, and until I'm relieved of my place by them at the expiration of my contract, I intend to run this mill without let or hindrance from the least of them."

"You're going to do no such thing, Mr. Bird. I have taken it upon myself to represent the board until such time as it can convene and bring about, formally, your discharge. I'll make my position and reasons clear enough to the stockholders when the time comes."

"But—but—it—it's illegal and—"

"Who said it was illegal?"

"I did!"

"Where did you get your authority?"

Bird tried to answer.

"But it isn't done, I tell you!" was all he could say.

"If one stockholder chooses to do this unconventional thing, who's going to stop him?" asked George.

"But I have some rights in the matter. I have a contract—"

"Very true. But I have possession. Your only alternative is to get an injunction to stop me from doing the things I propose to do. But I hardly think the court will ignore the right of a competent stockholder to step in here and save the business. I'll take my chances."

"You can't eat and sleep in this office, until the stockholders can assemble," protested Jones. "The minute you go out I shall take that desk and turn the tables on you."

"I shall go and come in and out of this office as I please. And every time I find you here and you do not move out when requested, I shall throw you out."

"And what if I choose the same expedient?"

"That, of course, is your privilege."

George arose from the chair. He stood a head and a half taller than the manager. Bird did some swift thinking.

"All right," he cried. "You can't run this business 10 hours without handing funds. The moment you go endorsing or writing checks, I'll have you jailed. And the bank official who passes your signature will find himself in the same fix."

"You don't suppose I came down here to assume charge without protecting myself on such a point, did you? Mr. Bird, you underestimate my intelligence and your own too."

"What have you done about the bank account?" Bird demanded.

"It might pay you to make inquiries at the bank. I have arranged for a bond to indemnify this company for any such sums as I may employ in the conduct of the business. A very accommodating gentleman, kindly consented to sign that bond for me."

"Who is he?"

"Judge Amos Farmer, president of the People's bank—also a minor stockholder in this company. You see, Mr. Bird, the judge couldn't call the bank's loans and bring your administration to a close without wrecking the company, so I told him I would run the company as it should be run."

"This is the limit!" cried Jonas.

"I'll sue you for my salary—"

"I haven't refused to pay your salary. That can run until the expiration of your contract."

Bird blazed. "Come in here, shove me out of a job, will you? I'll show you!"

He sprang for a heavy inkwell, caught it up and flung it.

In a twinkling Benedict was upon him. Thereupon the assembled office employes beheld their late lord and master moving swiftly toward the outer door. He was assisted in his progress by the pair of steel young hands wherewith he grasped, and a very capable, athletic young body supplying power for his locomotion. He went through the screen with a ripping sound.

Rolling to the ground, he finally regained his feet just as another human being dropped after him. It was the shipping clerk. Bird shook his fist at George standing in the doorway above.

"I'll sue you for this!" he cried.

George Benedict went back to the private room through a thoroughly subdued and seriously office.

Straight for the office of Bob Hentley, our town's attorney of consequence, Jonas Bird made his way.

Bob listened to his narrative in silence.

"What I want to know is, can he get away with it?" Bird concluded.

"Of course he can't get away with it—that is, unless—"

"Unless what?"

"Unless he's told you the truth about having Judge Farmer behind him. In that case you'd better take a check for the balance of your unexpired term and let the boy alone. Wait, and I'll get the judge on the telephone."

"You tell Bird," came the judge's command, "if he knows what's healthy for him—to accept that salary check Benedict will draw for him. Tell him I'm backing young Benedict to the limit."

The evening of the day when Jonas Bird departed from Paris our former ad man again visited the Telegraph's place of business.

"Where's June Farley?" he asked.

Judge Farmer was in the editor's private office gossiping with that worthy. Same Hod replied that June had just left the office. The banker smiled kindly at the young man.

"How's things going down to the mill, sonny?" he inquired.

"The men are all back," George replied, as he headed for the outer office door.

—He had opened that door when he thought of something he wished to ask the Judge, so he closed the door. The two men, so he closed the assumed the young man had left the office thereupon Sam Hod said something about George being a smart young fellow.

"A smart young feller?" repeated Judge Farmer. "Sure he's a smart young feller. But lemme tell you a secret. Hod. There's such a thing in the world as thrift."

"Thrift, what's that got to do with it?"

"I'm a banker—by trade and temperament. Thrift means clever managing. A man who knows how to manage his own finances cleverly can manage other people's."

"Do you mean to say you backed George Benedict in his new position because of his thrift?"

"I do. He got a job here in the Telegraph office in May. He got it in August. The day he made up his mind to make a fight of the place to which he was entitled he deposited two hundred dollars in our savings department—and now, over, he didn't draw upon it expenses. A chap as thrifty that deserves backing. Yes, I'll bet on him."

In the outer office George turned and tiptoed out—out to find June Farley.

To his credit, in view of their marriage this afternoon, let it be set down that he tiptoed out to give her something more than the two hundred unused dollars of her savings.

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Chance for Inventors

Among the many things that are regarded as highly desirable, the Institute of Patentees, in London, Eng., to offer the following suggestions as to inventions needed by the world:

Class that will bend.
Methods to reduce friction.
Practical ways of utilizing the tides.

A process to make flannel unshrinkable.
A furnace that will conserve 95 per cent of its heat.
A tobacco pipe that can be cleaned easily and effectively.

A motor engine of one pound weight per horsepower.
A smooth road surface that will not be slippery in wet weather.
A noiseless airplane, and an airplane that can be managed and easily by boy or girl.

ABE MARTIN

On Topics o' th' Day

This year marked th' one hundredth anniversary o' th' song, "Home, Sweet Home." Th' song wuz written by John Howard Payne an' wuz first sung in London in 1823. There hain't no records t' show whether Payne made twenty-eight or thirty dollars out o' th' song, but it is known that he died homeless an' an actor. While ever singer worthy o' th' name has rendered "Home, Sweet Home," time an' again durin' th' last hundred years th' song's greatest popularity has allus been amongst French harp, or mouth organ players. Even in these hard-fisted, cold-nosed days, th' beautiful song, when even half way put over, never fails t' raise a lump in th' throats o' people who own as many as three cars. Even apartment bred people an' members o' large, snarlin' families are softened by th' touchin' words an' sweet, soft melody o' th' dear ole song, but th' most chokin' up is done by tired, disappointed an' unhappy consumers. Th' song wafts their memories 'way back thro' th' mist o' years t' th' time when they really had a home. But we guess most ever'buddy has some sort of a lean-to they call home—at least it seems home after they git t' sleep an' fergit all th' torments an' vicissitudes o' life. Some people are gittin' too great for homes, some have two or three homes, an' some folks believe ther's more profitable ways o' spendin' money than tyin' it up in a home. Another peculiar thing about "Home, Sweet Home" is that



it appeals t' people that are never at home. Even folks that have only got ther homes half paid fer shiver with emotion when a pianer strikes up "Home, Sweet Home." Th' word "home" is th' sweetest in th' English language. "I love you" is purty sweet, but its several words put t'gether, an' while it often has a whole lot t' do with a real home, it's been known t' rub off an' is not allus reliable. How grand it used t' be t' git home from school, an' how good we feel after gittin' home from a circus. Jest think how a marathon dancer must feel after she gits home an' away from th' din o' saxophones an' cheerin' an' soaks her feet an' curls up in bed. Who has

not sighed t' git home while sittin' thro' an' intellectual treat? How many times have we come home late at night from even a "musical" show an' said, "I want someone t' shoot me if I ever leave home agin'!" Maybe th' ole home hain't what it used t' be, maybe some folks do have t' be held by Chinese cutthroats before they appreciate a home, but jest th' same it's th' one place where rest an' peace kin be found. After th' band quits playin', after th' dancin' an' gossipin' an' card playin' an' drinkin', after th' sight seemin' an' wanderin'—then comes home. In all th' world ther's no substitute fer home—nothin' jest as good.

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