

Rough-Hewn

By Dorothy Canfield

SYNOPSIS. Neale Crittenden, typical American youth, lives with his widowed mother in a village near New York city. He is graduated from Columbia and enters the law in France. Marie Allen, about Neale's age, lives with her mother in the home of Anna Eberhard, a French woman. Marie studies music and French and wins a prize in a musical contest. Neale's mother goes to South America. After several months his mother returns, while his father remains there on business. Neale meets Marie in Paris, and they are appointed to marry. Marie's mother, however, leaves with her father on a year's sojourn in the States, and she has been made exchange professor at the university.

For a long time after this he was haunted by the recollection of that scene, and especially by the sound of those strange, shocking sobs. Sometimes they woke him up at night, as though it were a sound in the room. They recurred to him at the most inopportune moments, in a train, at table, as he undressed for the night in a bedroom of a country hotel.

He would have given anything not to have heard them, and he tried every thing to drown them out.

He turned again at this time to books, and took down from the shelves volumes he had not looked at for some time, and especially books of abstract thought, history. He found Gregg's marks in one or two and wondered how Gregg was liking it being a professor out in California. "That was far away, and so was Gregg. And so were the books. They looked different in his hand; remembered pages had not the same message. He could not seem to put his mind on them as he had. It wandered to other things. A long time since he had tried to use his mind in that way. He had had mighty little time for reading abstract stuff.

Once, starting off on a trip sure to be tiresome, with a long wait in the late evening at Hoosick Junction, he chanced to put into his valise a volume of Emerson. He read the newspaper on the train up, the news, the financial page, and what was going on in the world of sports. But he left the paper in the train, and as he settled himself for the dreary wait in the dreary, dusty, empty station he opened the Emerson. What were some of those places he used to think so fine? . . . "Society is a joint-stock company in which the members agree, for the better securing of their bread to each shareholder, to surrender the liberty and culture of the eater. The virtue in most request is conformity. Self-reliance is its aversion. It loves not riches and ostentation, but names and customs. Who would be a man must be a non-conformist. . . ."

The other terror that scares us from self-trust is our consistency; a reverence for our past act or word. . . . But why should you keep your head over your shoulder? Why drag about this corpse of your memory, lest you contradict somewhat you have stated in this or that public place? Suppose you should contradict yourself; what then? It seems to be a rule of wisdom. . . . to bring the past for judgment into the thousand-eyed present, and live ever in a new day. Leave your theory as Joseph's coat in the hand of the harlot, and flee!"

He slammed the book shut again. It made him feel as that confounded music had, stirred up, restless, unhappy, ashamed. It was a voice from another sort of world, a voice that he would rather not hear, because there was nothing to be made of what it said. What could you do about it? Neale detested stirring up ideas about which there was nothing to be done. And he knew a great deal more now than he once had about the many, many things that could not be done.

He made an impatient rebellious gesture. Summoning? That was all very well. But to what? To something better than he had, more worth while than he was? Well, what was there? Where could it be found? Those vague, high-sounding phrases were easy enough to write, but what could you do about it in real life? What was the matter with what he had?

He got up and walked restlessly around the dreadful little room, helpless before its bareness. A whistle sounded down the track. He looked at his watch. No, his train was not due for half an hour yet. He went to the door and watched a through freight roll past, noting the names on the cars as they flashed into the light from the station-agent's window.—N. Y. Central, Pere Marquette, Wabash, Erie, Boston and Maine,—shoes and groceries and hardware, structural-steel, cement—all the thousand things needed every day to keep the wheels of daily material life moving, all made, bought and sold, shipped and handled by men like him. All necessary honest goods, all necessary honest work. . . . but that couldn't be all of life! The train pounded off, the silence of the night closed in on him, and in that silence he heard the echo of those appalling sobs, and the slam of the door. Queer thing, human life was, wasn't it? As he filled his pipe it came to him that once before he had felt the same aching restlessness, so intense that it was pain. That was the time when he had gone stale. He'd been put out of the game, and had sat on the side-lines eating his heart out. He was there again, gone stale, out of

the game. He had the strength, he had the speed, now as then. Why was it he stood outside the game? Other men were giving their souls to it. Maybe he was a quitter, after all. There had certainly been quitting or something the matter in his relations with Martha. . . . how empty life was without Martha. . . . But he was mighty glad he wasn't going to marry her.

He was a fine specimen anyhow! "Well now, well now," he shook himself together, "let's consider all this. What's the best thing to do when you go stale and have a slump?" Atkins had showed him what to do that other time. He had actually profited by it in the end, profited immensely by being temporarily out of the game, so that he could consider and understand the real inwardness of what it all about.

Why, perhaps that was what he needed to do now, pull out for a while, get away from the whole thing, look at it from a distance, get a line on what it was all about. He sucked on his pipe, cocking his head sideways to look at the ceiling, his hands deep in his pockets. There was nothing to hinder his taking a year off. He had money enough. And not a tie on earth to prevent his doing as he pleased. He'd lose his job, of course. But he didn't seem to be just madly in love with his job any more. And there were other jobs. "Well, by George, why not?"

Where should he go? Anywhere that wasn't the lumber business. There was the whole world, the round globe hurtling through the infinite. What in God's name was he doing in Hoosick Junction?

There was England; and France; and Italy; and after that, why, anywhere again! Wherever he pleased. . . . the East, China, and where there were Malays and jungles. When his money gave out, if he still wanted to stay on he could earn his living as well there as here. "There!" That meant anywhere else. Anywhere else must be less dusty and less lousy and empty than here.

Why under the sun had he not thought of this before? Their damned old labels do stick after all. But he would seek them off!

His heart unfolded from its painful tight compression. The way out? Why had he been so long in seeing it? The way out was to put on your hat and go.

CHAPTER XXXVI.
I
Ashley, Vermont, May, 1904.
Horace Allen's cousin was astonished to the limit of astonishment by the news, and cried out accusingly, "Why, I thought the other time it was only because Flora wanted to go. I thought you thought it

would put you on the shelf altogether. I thought you hated it." Horace considered this, sitting heavily on a bench while Cousin Hetty pruned a nearby rose bush, rigorously. Although she did not break in on his silence with a "Well?" or "Did you hear what I said?" she made him quite aware that she was relentlessly waiting for his answer.

"Well, I did," he admitted finally. "And I do yet. And it did put me on the shelf. That's all I'm good for now. It's because of my experience in Bayonne they want me to take charge of the Paris office."

"You don't have to go if they do," she pointed out; and this as she expected, brought out the real reason. "Those four years in France have spoiled me for a living here," he said and awaited doggedly her inevitable cry of amazement.

"You?" She stood up from her shorn rose-bush, her huge shears in one clumsily-gloved hand, a large thorn-spray in the other. "Well for goodness' sake, how?"

He was in no haste to answer this either, meditating silently, spring sun pouring an inconspicuous flood of golden young light on the sagging heaviness of his middle-aged face. Cousin Hetty let him alone again, and went on with the ruthless snip! clasp! of her great shears.

When he rose again to the surface, it was with a two-fold explanation. "Everybody that's worth anything over there has learned how to do his job. No slap-dash business. And there's plenty of cheap slave-labor. You're waited on! You're made comfortable. You've heard people talk of the charm of European life. What they mean is cheap labor. There's nothing more charming for the employer."

"Well?" commented Cousin Hetty. After a time she remarked, resolutely gathering up the villainously prickly shoots she had been cutting off, "I should think you'd be sort of ashamed of the slave-labor part of it. An American!"

She was not one to hesitate, either to handle thorns herself, or to thrust them upon others.

"Oh, I am," admitted Marie's father casually, and then as though it gave him a faint amusement to shock her, "I forgot to mention their cooking and good wines."

She seemed to take any notice of this, going on, "And I should think,"

she stayed her steps for a moment, as she turned away to carry the pruned-off trash to the spot where the spring bon-fire with its exquisite coils of blue smoke faintly dimmed the exquisite clarity of the mountain air. "I should think that if you found good workmanship such a fine thing, you might try to do something towards getting more of it in your own country, instead of just going off where it grows already."

"Oh, heavens! you don't see me trying to 'make the world a better place to live in,' do you? What sort of Harold-the-Uplifter do you take me for?" he protested, with a snarl.

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(Continued in The Morning Bee.)

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Adele Garrison "My Husband's Love"

Is There Something Jim Wishes to Tell Made Alone?
It was my flashlight whose rays found Jim first, and though the light from Katie's played upon his bound figure but a few seconds later, I had time to clap my hand over my mouth and silence the terrified scream which tore from her throat at the sight of her husband.

"Keep quiet," I muttered sternly. "He isn't hurt, I'm sure, but you

don't know who may be near us." "I be so good," she whispered humbly, "see you shoot let me go by my man."

"Of course, silly," I whispered back. "Put out the flashlight, keep close to me and don't utter a sound."

"I not breathe, me," she promised earnestly, and in the darkness, we grouped our way toward Jim.

I fumbled first with the gas, and found that it had been so carelessly tied that its removal was an easy thing.

"Don't try to speak Jim, for a little," I warned in a whisper. "Let the stiffness wear away from your mouth first. Katie, spread your coat over Jim's hand and hold your flashlight under it, so that I can see what I'm doing."

She obeyed me scrupulously, and I set to work on the securely knotted bonds. It was a tedious task, and Katie's sense of deference was not proof against the feminine instinct to say, "I told you so."

"Maybe you wish now you had that beag knife you make me put down—no?—yes?" She whispered slyly. Jim saved me the admission I would have felt bound to make. From his stiffened lips came the one word explosively: "Pocket!"

I grasped his meaning at once, but it was several seconds afterward that I realized he had almost shouted the

word, taking no precaution against being overheard.

"Look in his pockets, Katie." I said quickly. "I think he has a knife there."

"I know eet," she answered, handling me the flashlight and rummaging through the pockets of her spouse. "I beeg fool no tink of dot before. Here eet is."

She held up her hand triumphantly, and the next moment, with the aid of her strong teeth, had opened the blade. But she did not hand the knife to me.

"You better hold coat and flashlight, let me cut," she said uneasily but authoritatively. "I more used to knife like dees."

"You are right, Katie," I assented readily. Within a few seconds she skillfully had cut the bonds confining Jim's wrists and ankles, and with both of us helping him, he got up to his feet, staggered a bit and then spoke, slowly as is his wont, but with no marked effects of the treatment to which he had been subjected.

"I'm all right," he assured us, and I knew by his voice that he was speaking the truth.

But there was a suppressed excitement in his tone, foreign indeed to stolid Jim, and something indefinite in his manner as he moved forward with Katie's arm around his—she persisted in the delusion that he could not walk without her aid—

gave me a sudden queer little intuition that his excitement concerned me in some manner, and that he was only waiting Katie's temporary absence to tell me about it.

Katie had no intention of being absent for some time to come, however. Her anxiety for Jim's safety allayed, she was ready to indulge her cinema-fed soul with all the thrills to be gleaned from the situation.

"Jeem! Jeem!" she pleaded in a stage whisper. "Did dot bootlegger get away?"

"He sure did," Jim replied in ordinary tones, "clean as a whistle."

"Hush-h!" Katie warned dramatically. "Maybe somebody hear."

"The whole world can hear now," Jim returned a bit despondently. "The fellow's gone, and the man—"

He stopped short, went back laboriously.

"The fellow's gone a long ways by now, and there's nobody else around to hear, so there is no use whispering."

"The trooper didn't pass your way then?" I asked.

Jim was unconsciously long in answering, I thought.

"Ye-es," he said at last, "but what's that?"

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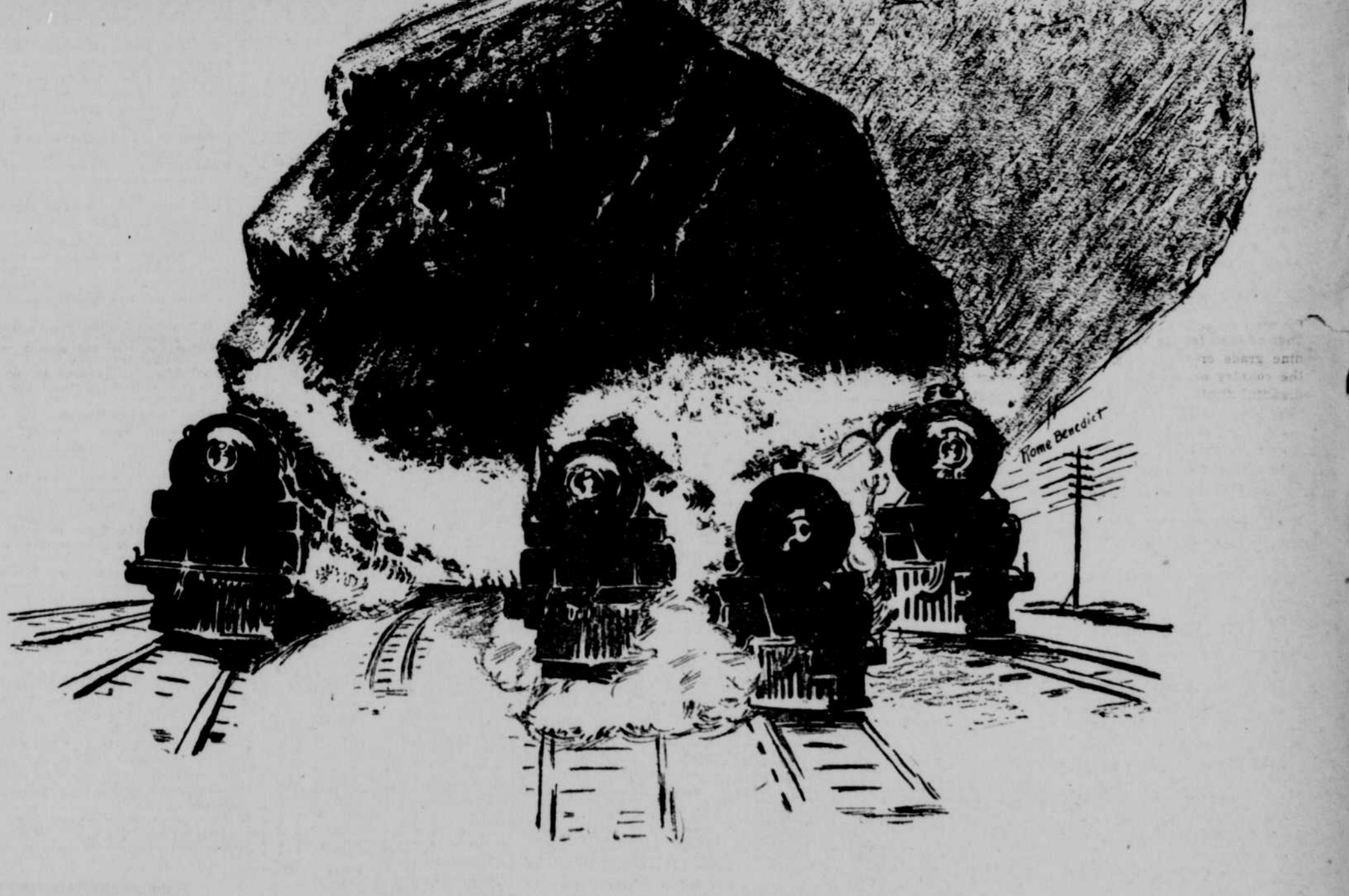
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