

The Main Chance

BY
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CHAPTER XXIII.—(Continued.)

John Saxton sat in the office of the Traction Company on a hot night in July. Fenton had just left him. The transfer to the Margrave syndicate had been effected and John would no more sign himself "John Saxton, Receiver." His work in Clarkson was at an end. The Neponset Trust Company had called him to Boston for a conference, which meant, he knew, a termination of his service with them. He had lately sold the Poindexter ranch, and so little property remained on the Neponset books that it could be cared for from the home office. He had not opened the afternoon mail. He picked up a letter from the top of the pile, dated from San Francisco, and read:

"My Dear Sir:
"I hesitate about writing you, but there are some things which I should like you to understand before I go away. I had fully expected to remain with you and Bishop Delafield and to return to Clarkson that last morning at Poindexter's. I cannot defend myself for having run away; it must have seemed a strange thing to you that I did so. I had fully intended acting on the bishop's advice, which I knew then, and know now, was good. But when the west-bound train came, my courage left me; I could not go back and face the people I had known, after what had happened. I told you the truth there in the ranch house that night; every word of it was true. May be I did not make it clear enough how weak I am. Things came too easy for me. I guess; at any rate I was never worthy of the good fortune that befell me. It seemed to me that for two years everything I did was a mistake. I suppose if I had been a real criminal, and not merely a coward, I should not have entangled myself as I did and brought calamity upon other people.

When I reached here I found employment with a shipping house. I have told my story to one of the firm, who has been kind to me. He seems to understand my case, and is giving me a good chance to begin over again. I suppose the worst possible things have been said about me, and I do not care, except that I hope the people in Clarkson will not think I was guilty of any wrong-doing at the bank. I read in the newspapers that I had stolen the bank's money, and I hope that was corrected. The books must have proved what I say. I understand now that what I did was worse than stealing, but I should like you and Mr. Porter to know that I not only did not take other people's money, but that in my foolish relations with Margrave I did not receive a cent for the shares of stock which he took from me—neither for my own nor for those of Miss Porter. I don't blame Margrave; if I had not been a coward he could not have played with me as he did.

"The company is sending me to one of its South American houses. I go by steamer to-morrow, and you will not hear from me again. I should like you to know that I have neither seen nor heard anything of my brother since that night. With best wishes for your own happiness and prosperity, yours sincerely,

"JAMES WHEATON."
On his way home to the club Saxton stopped at Bishop Delafield's rooms, and found the bishop, as usual, preparing for flight. Time did not change Bishop Delafield. He was one of those men who reach 60, and never, apparently, pass it. He and Saxton were fast friends now. The bishop missed Worry out of his life; Worry was always so accessible and so cheering. John was not so accessible and he had not Worry's lightness, but the Bishop of Clarkson liked John Saxton. The bishop sat with his inevitable hand-baggage by his side and read Wheaton's letter through.

"How ignorant we are!" he said, folding it. "I sometimes think that we who try to minister to the needs of the poor in spirit do not even know the rudiments of our trade. We are pretty helpless with men like Wheaton. They are apparently strong; they yield to no temptations, so far as any man knows; they are exemplary characters. I suppose that they are living little tragedies all the time. The moral coward is more to be pitied than the open criminal. You know where to find the criminal; but the moral coward is an unknown quantity. Life is a strange business, John, and the older I get the less I think I know of it." He sighed and handed back the letter.

"But he's doing better than we might have expected him to," said Saxton. "A man's entitled to happiness if he can find it. He undoubtedly chose the easier part in running away. I can't imagine him coming back here to face the community after all that had happened."

"I don't know that I can either. Preaching is easier than practicing, and I'm not sure that I gave him the best advice at the ranch house that morning."

"Well, it was the only thing to do," Saxton answered. "I suppose neither you nor I was sure he told the truth; it was a situation that was calculated to make one skeptical. It isn't clear from his letter that the whole thing has impressed him in any great way. He's anxious to have us think well of him—a kind of retrospective vanity."

"But his punishment is great. It's not for us to pass on its adequacy. I must be going, John," and Saxton gathered up the battered cases and went out to the car with him.

Bishop Delafield always brought Worry back vividly to John, and as they waited on the corner he remembered his first meeting with the bishop, in Worry's

rooms at The Bachelors'. And that was very long ago!

CHAPTER XXIV.

Uncertainty and doubt filled John Saxton's mind and heart, and he saw no light ahead. He had seen Evelyn several times before she had left home, on occasions when he went to the house with Fenton for conferences with her father. He had intended saying good-by to her, but the Porters went hurriedly at last, and he was not sorry; it was easier that way. But Mrs. Whipple, who was exercising a motherly supervision over John, had exacted a promise from him to come to Orchard Lane during the time that she and the general were to be with the Porters in their new cottage. When he went East, Saxton settled down at his club in Boston, and pretended that it was good to be at home again; but he went about with homesickness gnawing his heart. He had reason to be happy and satisfied with himself. He had practically concluded the difficult work which he had been sent to Clarkson to do; he had realized more money from their assets than the officers of the trust company had expected; and they held out to him the promise of employment in their Boston office as a reward. So he walked the familiar streets planning his future anew. He had succeeded in something at last, and he would stay in Boston, having, he told himself, earned the right to live there. The assistant secretaryship of the trust company, which had been mentioned to him, would be a position of dignity and promise. He had never hoped to do so well. Moreover, it would be pleasant to be near his sister, who lived at Worcester. There were only the two of them, and they ought to live near together.

It is, however, an unpleasant habit of the fates never to suffer us to debate simple problems long; they must throw in new elements to puzzle us. While he deferred going to Orchard Lane a new perplexity confronted him. One of Margrave's "people" came from New York as the representative of the syndicate that had purchased the Clarkson Traction Company, and sought an interview. John had met this gentleman at the time the sale was closed; he was a person of consequence in the financial world, who came quickly to the point of his errand. He offered John the position of general manager of the company.

The next day John thought he saw it all more clearly. He went out and walked aimlessly through the hot streets. He realized presently that he had gone into a railway office and asked for a suburban time table. He carried this back to the club, and studied the list of Orchard Lane trains. He found that he could run out almost any hour of the day. He slept and woke refreshed, with the time table still grasped in his hand. He had been very foolish, he concluded; it would be a simple matter to go out to Orchard Lane to call on the Porters and Whipples. The next afternoon he went up to Orchard Lane.

It suited his mood that he should find no one at home at Red Gables but Mr. Porter, who played golf all the morning and slept and experimented at landscape gardening all the afternoon. He welcomed John with unwonted cordiality. There were some details connected with the transfer of the Traction Company to Margrave's syndicate which Porter had not fully understood, or which Fenton had purposely kept from him; and he pressed John for new light on these matters. John answered or parried as he thought wisest.

John left his greetings for the rest of the household. There was a train at 6 o'clock; it was now 5 and he loitered along, stopping often to look out upon the sea. A group of people was gathered about a tea table on the sloping lawn in front of one of the houses. The colors of the women's dresses were bright against the dark green. It was a gay company; their laughter floated out to him mockingly. He wondered whether Evelyn was there, as he passed out, beating the rocky path with his stick. Evelyn was not there; but her destination was that particular lawn and its tea table. Turning a bend in the path he came upon her. He had had no thought of seeing her; yet she was coming down the path toward him, her picture hat framed in the dome of a blue parasol. He had renounced her for all time, and he should meet her guardedly; but the blood was singing in his temples and throbbing in his finger tips at the sight of her.

"This is too bad!" she exclaimed, as they met. "I hope you can come back to the house."

She walked straight up to him and gave him her hand in her quick, frank way.

"I'm sorry, but I must be in to town on this next train," he answered. He turned in the path and walked along beside her.

"This happened to be one of our scattering days, for all except father."

"We had a nice talk, he and I. Your place is charming. Don't let me detain you. I'm sure you were going to join these lotus eaters."

"I don't believe they need me," she answered, evasively. "They seem pretty busy. But if you're hungry—or thirsty, I can get something for you there." They passed the gate, walking slowly along. He knew that he ought to urge her to stop, and that he must hurry on to catch his train; but it was too sweet to be near her; this was the last time and it was his own!

They paused finally and John held open a little gate in a stone wall. He was grave and something of his seriousness communicated itself to her. Clearly, he thought, this was the parting of the ways. "Won't you come in? There are plenty of trains and we'd like you to dine with us."

A great wave of loneliness and yearning swept over her. Her invitation seemed to create new and limitless distances that stretched between them. He spoke incidentally of the offer he had received from the Clarkson Traction Company. "I have refused the offer," he said, quietly. He had not intended to tell her; but it was doubtless just as well; and it would alter nothing. "My work in Clarkson is finished," he went on. "Worry's affairs will make it necessary for me to go back from time to time, but it will not be home again."

"I'm sorry," she said. "I thought you were to be of us. But I suppose there is a greater difference between the East and West than any one can understand who has not known both." They regarded each other gravely, as if this were, of course, the whole matter at issue.

"I can't go back—it's too much; I can't do it," he said, wearily.

"I now how it must be—this last year and Worry! It was all so terrible—for all of us." She was looking away.

John looked at her. It was natural that she should include herself with him in a common grief for the man who had been his friend and whom she had loved. She had always been kind to him; her kindness stung him now, for he knew that it was because of Worry; and a resolve woke in him suddenly. He would not suffer her kindness under a false pretense; he could at least be honest with her.

"I can't go back because he is not there; and because—because you are not there! You don't know—you should never know, but I was disloyal to Worry from the first. I let him talk to me from day to day; you; I let him tell me that he loved you; I never let him know—I never meant any one to know—" He ceased speaking; she was very still and did not look at him. "It was base of me," he went on. "I would gladly have died for him if he had lived; but now that he is dead I can betray him. I hate myself worse than you can hate me. I know how I must wound and shock you."

"Oh, no!" she moaned.

But he went on; he would spare himself nothing.

"It is hideous—it is cowardly of me to come here." His hands were clenched and his face twitched with pain. "Oh, if he had lived!"

She rose now and looked at him with an infinite pity.

"If he had lived," she said, very softly, looking away through the sun-dappled aisles of the orchard, "if he had lived—it would have been the same, John."

But he did not understand. His name as she spoke it rang in his ears. She walked away through the orchard path, which suddenly became to him a path of gold that stretched into paradise; and he sprang after her with a great fear in his heart lest some barrier might descend and shut her out forever.

"Evelyn! Evelyn!"

It was not a voice that called her; it was a spirit, long held in thrall, that had shaken free and become a name.

(The end.)

SAM SOTHERN NOT SAM AT ALL

His Alliterative Name a Sample of His Father's Notoriety.

Probably there is not one in twenty of the fellow members of his profession, either here or in England, who knows that the name of Sam Sothern, the actor, is not Sam at all, the New York World says.

Mr. Sothern came back to New York on Friday in response to a hurry call to act with Sir Charles Wyndham in "The Mollusc." He has been absent from this country more than fifteen years, although he made his first theatrical appearance in this country with the late John T. Raymond, a friend of his father, E. A. Sothern, in "The Private Secretary." During the early days of the starring career of his brother, E. H. Sothern, Sam, who is not Sam, acted in his support at the old Lyceum.

If Sam Sothern had registered in New York as George Evelyn Augustus T. Sothern possibly his own brother might not have recognized him.

George Evelyn Augustus T. was named to please his mother. His father, who was a comedian of the stage as well as on it, didn't like the long handle. He wanted a name that was short and expressive. He was appearing in "Brother Sam" in London at the time, and, for convenience, tacked the name of the play on the newly born infant. Brother Sam has kept it ever since.

Another thing that Sam Sothern received from his father—this by inheritance—was the tattered yellow manuscript of "Our American Cousin." It didn't seem like a large inheritance at the time, for the elder Sothern had played the piece to a standstill both in this country and in England. So Sam cast the prompt book into a trunk, where it slumbered twenty years until E. H. Sothern, two years ago, decided to revive the play under the name of "Lord Dundreary."

All these years a small fortune had been lurking in the crumpled bunch of papers. As it was Sam's property E. H. Sothern had to pay a fat royalty on it, and as "Lord Dundreary" has been one of E. H. Sothern's big successes in recent years a steady stream of American dollars has flowed into Sam's English pockets.

Caused a Breach.

Askitt—Why are you so down on Walker? You used to be the best of friends.

Eggbert—Yes, I know; but last fall he took my part, and I haven't spoken to him since.

Askitt—That sounds queer.

Eggbert—Not necessarily. You see, he's an actor, too—and I wanted the part for myself.

Her Experience.

Mrs. Brown—Do you believe that marriage is a lottery?

Mrs. Green—No, I consider it more of a faith cure.

Mrs. Brown—Why, how's that?

Mrs. Green—Well, I had implicit faith in my husband when we were first married—and now I haven't.

Deeply Interested.

Said She—Oh, I'm just awfully interested in baseball. I have a cousin who belongs to a college bunch.

Said He—Indeed! And what position does he play?

Said She—Well, I forget just now whether he's a knocker or a stopper.

The Explanation.

Edyth—Why did Clare insist on having a quiet wedding?

Maime—Oh, I suppose she thought it would make talk.

It is estimated that there are 8,000,000 telephones now in use in the world.

EDITORIALS

Opinions of Great Papers on Important Subjects.

THIEVES AND MELONS.

LAYTON T. ZIMMERMAN, an employe of an express company, stole \$10,000, then confessed to his crime, and will doubtless, in due course of justice, receive a sentence commensurate with his act. He is a thief, and it is for the good of society that he is made to suffer the penalty. But the matter has another phase. Zimmerman handled, approximately, a million a day. He worked eleven hours, 365 days in the year. For this time and responsibility he received the monumental salary of \$5 a month.

The corporation for which he worked is one of the wealthiest. With a capitalization of \$12,000,000, it has paid regular dividends of from 4 to 8 per cent. There have been numerous extra dividends during the last twelve years, and among these extra dividends there have been what is known in the vernacular of Wall street as "melon cuttings." These "melon cuttings" have taken the form of bonds issued gratuitously to stockholders. The bonds are secured by a deposit of securities with a trustee, the securities having been purchased with the excess of earnings over dividends. In 1898 \$12,000,000 of these bonds were issued to stockholders, and this was so satisfactory that the company gave an encore in 1907 to the tune of \$24,000,000. In other words, in addition to regular dividends and small extra dividends, this company, in nine years, divided \$36,000,000 among its stockholders.

These facts offer a violent contrast—the difference between \$5 a month and \$36,000,000 in nine years. Is there any relation between the two? Did the corporation acquire this vast amount by putting a premium on dishonesty in the form of inadequate salaries? From a moral viewpoint, honesty cannot be bought, but in an economic sense it is a commodity just as much as an article of merchandise. Zimmerman was paid to be honest, and possibly he rendered services in proportion to his wage. If the stockholders had been content with a few thousands less, and the corporation had paid its servant a little more out of the millions he handled, it might still have a faithful employe, instead of losing a man, with the brand of crime on his brow. It is the old battle between greed and morals.—Cincinnati Post.

CRITICIZING OUR SCHOOL SYSTEM.

THE widespread dissatisfaction with some of the aspects of our vaunted educational system, and the attitude of severe criticism maintained by the public toward it, are encouraging symptoms presaging its reformation. No one who ponders the abstracts of the various papers read at Denver before the National Educational Association, can fail to be struck with the note of discontent that pervades them. The teachers, no less than the parents, recognize the fact that the American school system, while sound in principle, is not altogether sound in practice.

One educator at Denver put the thing in a neat epigram when he said that a preparatory course to the presidency is not the object of the public school system. Some of the boys are going to be laborers, mechanics, artisans and what not. Not all of them can become presidents. It seems reasonable, therefore, that we should give these boys in school the things that will

be useful to them in after-life, instead of trying to make possible presidents out of them all.

The intense practicality of the age, the utilitarian tendencies of our civilization strongly demand that less emphasis be put on the merely cultural studies. Historically speaking, our grade schools have developed as places where youth may prepare for the high school, while that institution in turn has been closely articulated with the college or university. This is all well enough for those fortunate enough to be able to complete the entire course. But the fact has been more or less ignored that the great mass of school children finish their schooling without either high school or university courses. These young adventurers into real life should be as well equipped as possible for their enterprise. They now waste many precious moments in merely cultural study, when they might be devoting their time to studies that will help them along the thorny path of real life.

Common school education needs reformation in practical directions. It is a happy circumstance that those who study education most deeply, and those who merely come in contact with its manifestations through their children, are coming to agree on that point.—Minneapolis Journal.

"GET A WESTERN MAN."

ET A Western man," is getting to be a common cry in the East. It was heard a good deal lately when Harvard had a choice to make. There is a suspicion abroad that "the West" is a good place to raise men; that the physical and mental conditions are favorable out there for

growing folks; that the spirit of the West is wholesome, its air inspiring, and its educational apparatus easily adequate to give to energetic minds the necessary tools to work with. Even so far East as Oberlin, O., it is noted that they raise some inquiring chaps whose inquisitiveness is persistent and brings interesting results. That is a wonderful nursery of human life that stretches from the Alleghenies to the Rockies, abounding in space and nourishment for body, mind and soul. There are coming out of that great nursery great children, whose thoughts and discoveries and deeds will do for human life, wherever it exists, greater, far greater, services than any prophet dare predict.—Harper's Weekly.

WHY LAWS ARE BROKEN.

HERE are some laws which at the time of their enactment were accurate expressions of public opinion. But public opinion has changed, and has neglected to make the laws change with it. There are other laws which never did express public opinion, but which were enacted and have been retained on the statute book through the indifference of a public opinion which is at heart hostile to them, or through its neglect or its inability to assert itself with effective expression. The reproach has often been uttered that we are not a law-abiding nation. At least we must plead guilty to too light a regard for law and to too little insistence upon its uniformly being what in theory it is and what in fact it should be—the formal expression of enlightened public opinion.—New York Tribune.

WON A PRIZE.

"You'd ought to see the swell time we put in at the masquerade last night," said Florence to Mabel. "You know, the last time I seen you I said Annie and me was gint as Mary Queen of Scots or M'ree Ant'nette or some of those swell dames, but when we found that we'd have to read up to learn how they acted we decided we'd just fix up like a couple of pickaninnies. Fun! I nearly died."

"Did you black up?" asked Mabel.

"Black up!" echoed Florence. "Like the ace o' spades. Honest, you'd die laughin' if you'd seen us. We got a couple of wigs off a real wigmaker and we did our hair up in little tight bunches all over our heads, so's we could get the wigs on. Then we wore little short skirts and black shirt waists. Charlie and Jim—Jim's Annie's beau—fixed up two tramps, and if they wasn't the limit!"

"But the most fun," continued Florence, "was when they lined us up to give the prizes. They give a prize for the most comical-dressed couple and the most unquickest-dressed couple and they made the folks march around the hall in front of the judges. The judges was sittin' up on a kind of platform at one end."

"Well, Annie and me marched together and then Charlie and Jim come behind us. Well, just before we got to the judges' stand Charlie reached over and yanked my wig off my head and Jim done the same to Annie's. There we stood with all them little knobs of hair stickin' up all over our heads. Well, honest, I thought the folks'd die laughin'. You know Annie's real kind o' blonde and her head's awful pink under her hair and she was blacked up to just where the wig come to, and she sure was as good as a show. I guess I looked pretty near as comical as she did."

"Well, I give one look at Annie and let out a holler. Annie yelled, 'Beat it, girlie!' and we grabbed hold of each other's hands and started for the dressin' room, tight as we could run. We didn't get no more'n half-way down the room, though, before everybody was ketchin' hold of us and before we knew it they hustled us up on the platform where the judges was sittin'."

"My!" gasped the listener. "Wasn't you awful embarrassed?"

"For a minute we was," confessed Florence. "Then I seen how scared Annie looked and I leaned over and whispered, 'Do a cake walk. We ain't goin' to let 'em put it over us like this.' So there we cake-walked 'round there, feelin' perfectly crazy, and all the folks hollered, 'Do it again!' every time we stopped, till we was so out of breath they just had to let us get down."

"Wouldn't I have liked to be there!" said Mabel.

"You'd have had the time of your life," Florence assured her. "When the judges announced the prizes for the most comical-dressed couple, me and Annie got them! The prizes were a pair of umbrellas. Charlie and Jim got the prizes for the most unquickest-dressed couple."

"Who got the other prizes?" queried Mabel.

"Oh, the judges didn't show much taste the way they give the other prizes. The girl that got the prize for the most artistic-dressed couple had on a kind of long-trailin' white dress, with a lot of spangles on it, and she had a star in her hair. She called herself Aurora. I don't know what for, unless Aurora was her home town. The fellow that was with her had on tights and a kind of cape thing and a cap. They was all black and he had spangles sewed on him and half moons and things. He looked kind of swell, but the girl was sloppy. His prize was a brush and comb in a case and hers was a diamond (maybe) terrier like the duchesses wear in their hair. Say, you'd ought to see that stuck-up thing goin' round afterward! I nearly died laughin' and Charlie said if that was the way the girls in Aurora looked he guessed he'd stay right in Chicago."

"Come up to the house some evenin' and I'll show you my prize. And say, Charlie calls me his pickaninny now."

—Chicago Daily News.

HE CALLS THIS SPORT.

But to Some of Us the Story Smacks of Brutality.

In each of us is the germ of savagery. The old instinct for cruelty and slaughter manifests itself most readily in our hunting and fishing sports. Under the spell of the chase we are guilty of things which, somehow, tend to shock us when we consider them in cold blood. Take the following recital of how a hunter got a moose in Nova Scotia, for example. The man who tells the story, not yet free from the thrall of the "sport," probably sees nothing but glory in his

achievement, but to us who sit in our easy chairs and read there is something cruel and repellent in the tale. The extract is from an article in the National Sportsman:

The sun had set, and we were going only a short distance further before camping, when Len's sharp eyes detected a moose standing partly behind a rock with a background of pines at what we afterwards found was 130 yards. His "Look at the big bull!" instantly drew my attention, and my 40's began to roar, but I'll fared it that on account of the perspiration dropping on my glasses earlier in the day, I had taken them off, and now in the falling light could scarcely distinguish either moose or near sight when my left eye closed, although the bright front sight showed plainly. My first three shots were misses, and I might have become rattled had not Len's voice, as calm as though nothing was happening, came to me, "You are shooting high." Drawing down the foresight until I could scarcely see, I pulled once more and hit the fore leg just above the elbow, but without touching any bones, and the moose started, although very lamely, over the open. Four more shots and he was down, over 200 yards away, and we started to run, but before we got half-way he started down again, and we were able to get within a distance that made it certain he was ours; but once more he got on his feet and although unable to take a step, glared at us until another shot, the only one in a vital spot, put him down for good.

We found that all six shots after he had started had touched him; one had broken his fore leg just above his hoof; another touched his ear, another chipped a horn; another, probably the one that put him down first, struck the center of his back just an inch too high to affect the backbone, and another struck behind, passing through one quarter and breaking the hipbone on the other, disabled him completely, the last, fired close, struck behind the shoulder, as intended.

Documentary Evidence.

"What shall I say if Aigernon proposes to me?" said the confiding young woman.

"Tell him you want time to think it over," replied the worldly wise friend, "and then change your summer residence, so that he will have to discuss the matter in writing."—Washington Star.

Every man finally leaves the bars down.