



(Continued.)

CHAPTER XI.
TEN THOUSAND DOLLARS.

I came near committing a deplorable blunder that would have brought my ruin. It was easy to subdue this self-confident man who towered above me, and whose fingers were itching to grip my throat, but that would have been only a temporary advantage. The fatal knowledge would remain with him and the shadow already darkening my life would quickly become a reality.

I must first learn all that he had to tell. There must be no violence between us until his secrets were mine. Ignoring his threat, I backed to a chair and motioned him to take another.

"Sit down. After we have finished talking it will be time to act."

He breathed hard, and only by a prodigious effort did he retain mastery of his passion. He was a violent tempered man, and was so enraged that he longed to chastise the life out of me.

But he was after money and could postpone his vengeance until it was in his hands. After that, look out!

He took the chair to which I waved him, crossed his muscular legs, and with his glittering eyes fixed upon me, growled:—

"Well, what have you to say?"

"It is rather. What have you to say?"

When I telegraphed you that I had no clear recollection of the events in which you were interested, I told you the truth. To save my life I could not recall your name. I sent my message to 'Budd,' at the Auditorium, because I did not know how else to address it. The name of Tom Discoe was gone as entirely from me as if I had never heard it pronounced. Even now I cannot recall the incidents that I know are in your mind."

Nothing was clearer than that he did not believe a syllable of this, but he evidently concluded to wait.

"How is it you came out to Englewood?"

"I left town by the advice of my physician."

"Why?"

"I have intruded the reason. Last week I was violently thrown from my horse while riding in the park. Since then matters have been so confused in my mind that the doctor told me I must go away for several weeks and take a complete rest."

"Sort of queer that you fix upon Englewood!" he sneered.

"And why?"

"So handy."

"So handy for what?"

"Come now, that won't do. I can stand a good deal, but you're piling it on too thick."

"I assure you that I am at a loss to understand what you mean."

"Have you forgotten that it is just two miles from here to the Palisades of the Hudson—that there is a certain house on the right of the road, built of stone, and standing well back in the woods and not far from the river, where you met Jake Huke and me last autumn to arrange some business matters?"

I bent my head, as if in perplexing thought, conscious all the time of the sneer on the evil face in front of me.

"Mr. Discoe," said I, with the meekness of a lamb, "if you will be good enough to go over as rapidly as you choose, the transactions we have had with each other—that is, from the beginning—it will help us to get on. Unless you do so, I don't believe it possible to arrange things satisfactory."

"Well, I'll be ——" he growled, lowering the bent leg and crossing it with the other. "This beats anything yet!"

I waited patiently, and, after some hesitation, he shoved his hat from his forehead, jammed both hands in his trousers pockets, and leaning back in his chair, said:

"There's so little of it that it won't take me long. You remember last summer that down at Sheephead you put up \$1,000 and won \$5,000? Jake and me had our money on the wrong horse and got it in the neck. While you were cashing in your tickets we noticed your roll of money. You were in high spirits over your good luck, and Jake remarked that if you wanted a good thing he could put onto it. You said you were ready and would slide. That night we met you at the Brunswick and explained the game, which was showing the queer."

"Ah, yes. It's all coming back to me now," I interjected without helping matters in the least.

"Our plan was not to do the work here in the east, but in the west. Jake and me were to go out to Kansas and the Dakotas, making the Auditorium in Chicago our headquarters. When everything was ready, we were to let you know."

"And I was to do what?"

"Of course, I called to see you must have good money to work with, but there's nothing mean about Jake and me, and we agreed not to call on you for your share."

"Which was how much?"

"Ten thousand dollars, until the thing was on its feet and fairly going. It took us a good deal longer than we thought. Jake got pinched, and it was a tight squeeze. So things drifted along until this spring."

"And you kept me informed?"

"Of course, I called to see you several times in New York, and all three of us had a meeting some months ago at the stone house. When you came out to Chicago last winter, we had a long talk—the three of us again—and you pledged your word that when we needed it you would let us have the \$10,000, for which you were to receive one-third of the profits and take no risks at all."

"And I have never given it to you?"

"Never given it to us! I should say not. There's where Jake and me

— took of ourselves. You offered it to us twice, and we refused to take it."

"Why did you refuse?"

"We were so dead sure of you that we were content to wait, being as we did not need it. You set 'em up every time and acted like the royal fellow we believed you to be instead of the sneak you are."

And Tom Discoe's fingers twitched, as if he could no longer keep them off me; I was on my guard, but he did not know it.

"Are you sure I have never advanced you anything on account?"

He could hardly restrain his anger.

"Not a cent! Don't set up that claim. You owe clean \$10,000 and not a penny less. Why, I reminded you of the whole thing in my last letter."

"The one sent before this last note in answer to my telegram?"

"Yes; I went over the whole ground, showing that you had paid a dollar, though you offered to do so when we didn't want it. You remember that we agreed to refer to the money as 'farmers,' so that no one could get on to it."

A mountain rolled from off my heart. In the eyes of the law Harold Westcott had committed no crime. He had thoughtlessly agreed to do so, when in the excitement of his success on the race course, and, possibly, while under the influence, too, of wine. In his sober senses he shrank from the dangerous step, but lacked the courage to back out. He was afraid of Tom Discoe and Jake Huke, who no doubt had threatened him, as one had already threatened me.

Harold was lacking in moral stamina, for he as much confessed it when he declared that he was pestered half to death by the parasites of society. Most likely, too, these evil men believed that in meeting with them and planning this wicked business he had gone too far to withdraw. If he attempted to do so, they not only meant to expose him, but to visit personal violence upon him.

As the only way out of a bad situation he weakly fled to Europe. Aware that the crisis must come within a few months, he left me to meet it, without giving the slightest intimation of its nature.

Therein I condemned him, as I had the right to do, for had he made it clear I would have been prepared at every point, but he was ashamed to do so, and now the all important knowledge was mine.

And with it came a feeling of gratitude beyond the power of language to express. I would find out the address of Harold and tell him everything, adding that there was not the slightest cause to fear these two miscreants. Before he returned to meet them I would have a settlement with Messrs. Discoe and Huke, which, to say the least, would leave them in a demoralized condition.

As if fortune was playing into our hands, this same Discoe had written me a letter in which the whole truth was told, and this letter was now in the hands of Detective Cone. True, he was amenable to the law for pilfering the missive, but he would not be made to suffer, since it had turned out so well.

"I presume you came to New York to get the \$10,000."

"You guessed it the first time, and what's more, I'm going to have it. Keep that smoking in your pipe. Why didn't you send it before?"

"That I twice offered it to you ought to be proof enough that I meant to keep my pledge, but three weeks ago matters were so bad with me that I couldn't have raised \$1,000 if my life had been at stake."

"Don't believe a word of it."

"Nevertheless, it's true."

"How are you fixed now?"

"I've got money to burn."

"Are you ready to hand it over?"

"Will you take my cheque?"

"Not by a large majority. Them bits of paper sometimes turn up good for nothing, but coin or green paper hits it every time."

"Do you suppose I carry that amount of money round with me? I have only enough to pay my expenses for a few weeks."

"Then you must draw the money and turn it over to us."

"I will go into town to-morrow and take it out of the bank. I will come back to Englewood on the afternoon train and will meet you—where? Here?"

He thought for a moment. Then his eyes gleamed.

"At the old stone house on the right of the road a half-mile this side of the Palisades. You remember it, for it is in plain sight from the road."

"Yes, and a path leads to it where there is an occasional copperhead. But tell me how you knew I had come to Englewood?"

"I didn't know it. You used to talk of the place as being very pretty, and said you had a notion of making your home there. It was all guesswork on my part."

"And mighty good guessing."

His face hardened again.

It was clear to me why he had selected this lonely spot for the passing of the \$10,000. There were hundreds of places in New York where we could have met and made the exchange without the slightest personal risk. But my previous hesitancy convinced him I was unwilling to pay over so large a sum. He suspected that I would set some trap by which the money would be saved and he and his pal punished.

But if I were to meet him in the out-of-the-way place, where no human being could give me help, nothing was to prevent their working their sweet will with me.

Nothing but—that, however, later.

"Will you meet us at that place to-morrow night, say at 9 o'clock?"

"Only Providence shall prevent me," was my firm reply. "I'm tired of this business, and want it settled."

"So do we, and what's more, we're going to have it settled. You needn't think there's any trick by which you can echure us. Of course you can go back to the city to-morrow and stay there. You'll keep us out of the money, but your life will pay the forfeit."

How he longed to take me by the throat, but not half as much as I longed to take him by the throat! How easily I could wring his neck, as if he were a pigeon! How I would love to crush him to the floor and make him bellow for mercy!

But not yet!

"Don't mind if I am a few minutes late, but if alive I will be at the stone house to-morrow night at 9 o'clock, and I shall have \$10,000 in bank bills with me."

(To be Continued.)

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OF COURSE IT'S TRUE.

The Story of the Lame Horse and the Young Doctor.

"One reads so many stories about animal intelligence that it would be hazardous for a doubter to express his disbelief in almost any gathering of men at the present day," remarked Dr. W. W. Watkins. "A little instance came within my own observation a number of years ago when I was studying medicine and which convinced me that the members of the horse family at least ought to be credited with the possession of a very considerable quantity of reasoning power. It was the custom for the students at the medical institution at which I pursued my studies to wear a small badge upon their coats to distinguish them from others at the college. A horse belonging to the establishment was used a great deal about the medical department, and the animal seemed to have a special preference for the embryo doctors more than for any other people about the establishment."

"One day, while a number of us were gathered in a little knot upon a small campus in the rear of the college, the animal in question, which used to nip the grass in the location, came toward the group limping very badly. He came to a stop a dozen or more feet from the crowd and, carefully surveying the lot of us, finally made up his mind as to what he wanted to do and without any hesitation limped directly to my side, whinnied, stuck his nose against my body and held up his left foreleg. Looking down, I discovered a large nail imbedded in the frog of his hoof. This had evidently caused the lameness. I then realized the interesting fact that the animal desired attendance. I extracted the nail with some difficulty, and the horse whimpered with relief and walked away. Rather curious as to why the beast had picked me out to attend to his wound, I glanced at the boys and found the solution to the problem. Not one of the group had his medical badge upon his coat but myself. The horse had recognized the insignia, realized its significance and acted accordingly."—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

AFRAID OF THE HOODOO.

Why the Street Car Conductor Would Not Cut the Pageant in Twain.

A hearse crossed the track and the motoneer put on the brakes so suddenly that the car nearly stood on its nose. Then he sat down on the front seat to await the passing of the long string of carriages following the black draped vehicle.

A fat man who had nearly been thrown over the front rail by the sudden stopping of the car snorted angrily: "Why don't you cut across? I've got to catch a train. I can't wait here all day."

"Can't help it, boss. You'll have to wait and catch another train."

"Well, I'll report you to the company. That procession will take five minutes in passing us."

"Report away. I can't help it if the procession takes 20 minutes. You couldn't hire me to run this car across that funeral procession for the best job on the line. That's the worst hoodoo a man could run up against."

"Bah!" said the fat man.

"All right, boss. I know what I'm talking about. One of the best men on this line crossed a funeral procession soon after the trolley system was put in. A live wire dropped on the back of his neck and electrocuted him before he'd gone a block. A little while later another poor fellow cut across back of a hearse. He ran over three children in as many weeks. He quit the road as crazy as a loon. Now the conductor on that same car has lost every cent he had in the world, and his wife and child have died. Bah, yourself! I'd like to see you get off this car and walk across in front of one of those carriages. I'll bet you'd be catching your last train in this world pretty quick. Jest hop off and try it now."

But the fat man only shifted uneasily about on the hard car seat and waited silently until the last carriage had passed.—New York Telegram.

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