



(Continued.)

I had reached the elevator, when a glance at my watch showed that the afternoon was so well along that it was impossible to get to Wall street in time. All the offices were closed.

"It's too late. I must resign myself to the calamity that I know is coming."

My victory over myself seemed to have given me renewed mental strength. Despite the conviction that my fortune was to depart with the same suddenness it had come I put the disquieting reflection behind me and began thinking of Jeannette Lawrence.

I had not answered her letter, and doubtless she felt hurt by my neglect, but with that sweet charity which is essentially the possession of her sex she would attribute it to my brain trouble and not blame me therefor.

With my musings turned into another channel—that is, toward Harold—a vague uneasiness crept over me.

There is something in his course which I do not understand. I have it in my own hand that there was \$100,000 in the bank subject to my order when the amount was only one-fourth of that. It may have been a mistake on his part, and I will let it go at that.

It is something else that troubles me. He kept from me every hint of this counterfeiting business. Discoe told me that on two occasions at least Harold Westcott offered them \$10,000, and had they been caught in the act he would have been inextricably involved with them.

Harold was his own master and a free moral agent. Simple timidity does not explain his readiness to enter into this unlawful business, followed by his flight when the day drew near for the demand from these evil men for money.

I would be glad to believe that it was his love for Miss Lawrence that took him across the ocean, but his persistency in making his term of absence a year gives me a disconcerting suspicion of which I cannot free myself. Strange that he does not name an address through which I can communicate with him. If he is kept away after learning the whereabouts of Miss Lawrence, by his dread of Discoe and Huke, I can quickly remove that fear, and I will not permit myself to believe that any other cause can hold him in check.

My thoughts were revolving in this channel, when a letter dropped through the slit in the door. Snatching it up, my heart beat more quickly as I recognized the writing of Harold Westcott, so like my own. The envelope bore the London postmark:

My Dear Other Self,—I am back at the Berkeley, which will be my headquarters for a couple of weeks, when I think of making a lengthy trip on the Continent. If you have anything worth communicating, address me at the Berkeley, and I shall be sure to receive it. Any way, let me hear from you, with an account of how you enjoy being myself or rather yourself. W. ALCOTT.

At last the way was opened. Harold would be at the famous London hotel for a week to come, if not longer. It was easy to reach him by letter, but I could not abide the delay of the mail. It was frightfully expensive to use the cable, but a few minutes later my message was throbbing underneath the Atlantic!

Take next steamer home. Miss Lawrence arrived day you left. Have nothing to dread from any quarter. Discoe and Huke were caught in the act. (Of course their trial had not yet taken place.) No suspicion against you. Way clear. Expect you next steamer. H. O. W.

I looked for no reply to this, but it came on the following forenoon:—

Cannot return. Have written by this mail explaining everything. W.

This was an astonishing. Knowing that his betrothed was in New York and that nothing was to be feared from the two criminals, now safely immured in prison, he coolly announced that he could not come back to the metropolis.

To my mind there was but one explanation possible, and that instantaneous.

Expert bicyclists have already succeeded in riding a single wheel, or unicycle, for short distances. In years to come the unicycle may become as common a mode of locomotion as the bicycle. Only a few years ago people would have laughed at the idea that all the world would shortly be on wheels.

It is not in mechanics alone that the world is making rapid progress. Not many years ago all physicians pronounced consumption an incurable disease. To-day a large proportion of people recognize that it is a distinctly curable disease. Doctor Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery cures 98 per cent. of all cases of consumption. It has stood the test for thirty years. Thousands of people who were given up by their doctors, and had lost all hope owe their lives to this marvelous remedy. It acts directly on the lungs, cleanses the system, purifies and disease germs. It restores the appetite, corrects all disorders of the digestion, strengthens the weak stomach, makes the assimilation of the life-giving elements of the food perfect, invigorates the liver, purifies the blood and tones the nerves. It is the great blood-purifier, fleshes the cod liver oil, but the firm, muscular tissue of absolute health. An honest dealer will not offer you an inferior substitute for the sake of a little added profit.

Miss Mary Whitman, of East Dickinson, Franklin Co., N. Y., writes: "For nearly ten months I have had a bad cough, and was getting better, it grew worse. I was said to have consumption. I tried Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery, and when the second bottle was empty I had no cough and was cured."

Good temper is largely a matter of healthy blood. Dr. Pierce's Pleasant Pellets cure constipation. They are safe, sure, and once taken do not have to be repeated. One little Pellet is a gentle purgative, and once taken do not have to be repeated. If you could meet her, I hope

But that isn't my scheme. Since you are on the ground, why not take my place as the engaged lover of Jeannette? It may startle you, but I beg you to think of it. She is a real good girl, and if you are not taken at first with her you will soon grow to like her. She is rich, which reminds me I made a little mistake when I told you the size of the inheritance she brought you credit. It's just half the sum I promised. The expenses of my humming bird have compelled me to withdraw all my property from your side of the Atlantic and invest it here in the Old Lady of Thread needle street. I hope there is enough to last my charmer, though she is getting away with a good deal more than I expected.

As for Huke and Discoe, I intended to suggest that their matter was worth your attention. I really thought seriously of going in with them, for the prospect is good. I meant to recommend it to you, but since they seem to have made a mess of it of course that is out of the question.

I must speak of another matter—the amount which I agreed to give you for taking the character of Harold in place of Harmon Westcott. I named \$50,000 as the right year's salary, but that is like me—always too generous. Have you reflected that it equals the pay of the President of the United States?

I am surprised that you agreed to accept it without protest, and yet I don't blame you. I let you follow your such a soft snap. So I've changed my mind and decided to make it one-half the sum. That surely will be good wages for a mighty easy job. Now, don't attempt to lecture me. I fancy you will be grateful for the handsome bonus that is yours, but will feel like scolding me as to Miss Lawrence. But note to Huke as thou lovest me.

I have decided, too, to leave to you the task of explaining matters to my former fiancée. I would be deceived and wronged for me to write to her, for I haven't done so since leaving New York.

I shall remain here, as I told you, for some time to come. Since you have been so lucky in disposing of the Discoe and Huke business, I fancy it would have been luckier had you fallen in with them, it may relieve you to know that there are no more snags in your path. All now clear sailing, and with best wishes, I am, W. ALCOTT.

It was some minutes before I could master my emotions sufficiently to reason over the unprecedented state of affairs. My first impulse was to send him every dollar in my possession, and I actually sent out a check for \$50,000, but common sense intervened.

presented itself. He was implicated in some other wrongdoing which was of a still more serious nature. If such were the fact, the storm would soon break on my head.

Deprived of every dollar in the world, shorn of my miraculous strength, and in a position where it looked impossible to derive any aid from Harold Westcott, my doom would be as hopeless as that of Tom Discoe or Jake Huke.

Such was my reasoning, but how prone we mortals are to go astray! I was not within a thousand miles of the truth.

My reflections were not of a pleasant nature. It looked as if I had walked into every trap set for me and was deprived of every chance of escape.

"At any rate he has written to Miss Lawrence and made everything clear to her. So hereafter I must avoid her."

The temptation was strong to write to Harold, taking him severely to task, with the threat that if he did not do my bidding I would expose him at all costs. Great as would be the scandal, nevertheless I could convince him it was possible for me, through an appeal to my college mates and the friends of my boyhood, to establish my identity.

"However, I will wait until his letter arrives."

It was now noon, and I started downtown. At precisely the same minute that I entered the broker's office on the preceding day I stepped across the threshold again to learn my financial fate.

I quickly learned it.

CHAPTER XIX. A REVELATION.

With the same bland smile that he had greeted me on the preceding day the broker came forward and extended his hand. No doubt the headman becomes so accustomed to his ghastly business that he can thus welcome his victims.

"Mr. Westcott, have you ever speculated in Wall street before?"

"Never."

"Nor in any kind of stocks?"

"In none whatever."

"Will you promise to follow my advice?"

"That's asking a good deal, but I think it is safe to give you my pledge."

"Never risk another dollar as you did yesterday."

"You have my promise to that effect."

"And I added, mentally, 'It is a safe pledge to make, since I shall never be able to break it.'"

"You are a young man, and I have seen so many ruined by doing as you did that my heart goes out in sympathy for them. Well, since you wish to close the account, I will give you the balance due you."

"Then I have something?" I asked, in surprise.

"Yes. I will write our cheque."

He went back to his desk at the other end of the room within the railing, consulted for a few minutes with his bookkeeper, signed a cheque which was torn from a book and then came forward with the bland smile which had never left his countenance.

"Could I believe my eyes?"

"That bit of paper was an order for the Astor bank to pay me \$125,000, with some extra cents added."

"I judge you hardly expected that."

He remarked, with the beaming smile slightly broader.

"I should say not. I didn't expect anything."

"It would hardly have been as bad as that, but once in several thousand times a man like you hits it. You went blind, which is the reason. Had you spent several months figuring out how to make a strike, you would have had only a few hundreds coming to you. Allow me to congratulate you and don't forget my promise."

He extended his hand, which I took in a dazed way and then passed out in the street. Within the same hour the cheque was deposited in the Astor bank up town, which, I may say, was not the one where Harold Westcott kept his account.

"It will prevent future mistakes," I said, recalling the error in his statement to me regarding his balance.

"We can't be too careful of such things."

On the sixth day following the expected letter arrived from Harold. It was lengthy and left nothing to be told:

Dear Sir,—I have concluded to make a clean breast of everything. Since your telegram showed that you knew of Miss Lawrence's return to New York it is probable that you have met her. At least you learned that she and I were engaged in marriage to each other.

This is a deuced unpleasant fact when I inform you that I am already a married man. Some folks will condemn me and say I have not done the right thing. Perhaps it isn't exactly fair, but I swear to you that I had no intention of wronging her. When I asked her hand in marriage and she accepted it, there was never a devil deeper in love than I.

The wrong thing done by Jeannette was to leave me and go to Europe for an extended tour. She must have known that I could not exist without her, and that if she deprived me of the pleasure of her sweet presence I had the right to look elsewhere.

Well, I looked elsewhere, and was not long in finding my divinity. It was behind the footlights at the Olympia. Divine, entrancing, ravishing, irresistible as she was, I loved her for the first time the meaning of love—true, honest, genuine love.

Still I wasn't sure it would last, so I didn't write anything to Jeannette about it. I gave her credit for not wishing to wound her feelings. Did it last? It grew more intense as the days and weeks passed, until I could not exist out of her presence.

Ye gods, but those divinities are expensive! I haven't told you how much I spent on her during the three months of my honeymoon. But at last she consented to become my wife, and we were married. I had been married several weeks when I met you on the avenue.

That which was figuring on was as to how I should straighten matters with Jeannette. I was still figuring at it when fate brought you and me together. Then a brilliant scheme flashed upon me. You won't deny my cleverness when you come to understand its beauties.

I would go abroad with my charmer. I would hunt up Jeannette and introduce my wife to her. Of course there would be a scream and likely enough a faint. But it would be all over in a few minutes. Then, too, Jeannette could help me. I had made a choice. So help me, if you could meet her, I hope

But that isn't my scheme. Since you are on the ground, why not take my place as the engaged lover of Jeannette? It may startle you, but I beg you to think of it. She is a real good girl, and if you are not taken at first with her you will soon grow to like her. She is rich, which reminds me I made a little mistake when I told you the size of the inheritance she brought you credit. It's just half the sum I promised. The expenses of my humming bird have compelled me to withdraw all my property from your side of the Atlantic and invest it here in the Old Lady of Thread needle street. I hope there is enough to last my charmer, though she is getting away with a good deal more than I expected.

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"Yesterday and to-day, down to the moment I received this letter, the \$25,000 was as much mine as is the suit of clothes I am wearing, but not a cent belongs to me now, for to keep it would be to accept the wages of sin. Since the principal belonged to me yesterday and to-day does not, the accretions already made are wholly mine. Through providence and the good judgment of my brokers my fortune was quadrupled. From the gross amount I will deduct the \$25,000, plus the small sum he turned over to me before his departure, and send it to him. The rest belongs to me."

I was impatient to carry out my decision. No doubt, now that Harold had a spendthrift wife on his hands, he would be glad to receive the money, and any indignant comment I chose to make would be thrown away.

A bill of exchange for the exact sum was purchased, placed in an envelope and directed to H. O. Westcott, Berkeley house, London. The hardest thing to do was to restrain myself from giving rein to my consuming indignation. I did write a letter, such as would have blistered the hide of a rhinoceros, but after reading it over I twisted it up and held a lighted match to the corner until it was ashes.

"He would call it a deuced good joke. He would show it to the woman with him, and she, too, would laugh at the absurdity of it. They shall not have that consolation."

So when the missive reached Harold he found within the envelope a draft for the amount named. There was not a single word. He would understand it. There are some occasions where silence is a thousandfold more expressive than speech.

That disgusting business off my hands, I lost no time in leaving the apartments which he had occupied so long. I could no more breathe and exist in them than I could breathe and exist in a den of rattlesnakes. So far as possible everything that could remind me of the unspeakable miscreant was removed from sight. I took up my quarters in another portion of the city, leaving directions whither my mail should be forwarded.

"Somehow or other I am convinced that that is the last of Harold Westcott, and that I shall never hear of him again."

But I was mistaken. Ten days later the startling interruption came in a form of which I had never dreamed.

(To be Continued.)

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Nature has hundreds of queer ways of scattering seeds broadcast, but none of them is more peculiar than that of a South American tree called Hura crepitans. A celebrated naturalist, in speaking of this remarkable tree, uses the following language: "A curious instance of seed scattering (shooting them from the pod) is afforded by Hura crepitans, a handsome tree which is quite common in the valley of the Amazon. This tree has a peculiar fruit, somewhat flattened, with a deeply furrowed or fluted body, made up of a circle of many cells, each containing one seed. When the seeds are ripe, the cells open and expel them with a loud report; hence the fruit is sometimes called the 'monkey's dinner bell.'"

"Stories have been told of hura fruits being placed in desks, and subsequently opening and discharging their seeds with such violence as to break ink wells, and even to crack the wood of the desk."

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