

ILLUSTRATIONS OF LAUREN STOUT

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CHAPTER I.

"Palled!" ejaculated John Vallant blankly, and the hat he had dropped to the clear-colored rug like a huge white sploit of sudden fright. "The Corporation—failed!"

The young man was the glass of fashion, from an aikoon waist, on the spotless (Parisian) his pearl-gray gaiters, and well favored—a little stalwart figure, with wide-set hazel eyes and strong brown hair waving back from a candid brow.

Never had his innocuous and butlerly assistance known a surprise so startling. He had swung into the room with all the nonchalant habit of the ingrained certitude of the man with achievement ready-made in his hands. And a single curt statement—like the ruthless blades of a pair of shears—had snipped across the one splendid scarlet thread in the woof that constituted life as he knew it. He had knotted his lavender scarf that morning a vice-president of the Vallant Corporation—a member of the great and most successful of modern organizations; he sat now in the fading afternoon trying to realize that the huge fabric, without warning, had toppled to its fall.

How solid and changeless it had always seemed—that great business fabric worn by the masses, could so dimly remember! His own invested fortune had been derived from the great corporation the elder Vallant had founded and controlled until his death. With almost unprecedented earnings, it had stood as a very Gibraltar of finance—a type and sign of brilliant organization. Now on the heels of a trust's dissolution which would be a nine-days' wonder, the vast fortune had crumbled like a card-house. The rains had descended and the foods had come, and it had fallen! The man at the desk had wheeled in his revolving chair and was looking at the trim athletic back blotting the daylight, with a smile that was little short of a covert sneer. He was one of the local managers of the corporation whose rule was to be that day's sensation, a colorless man who had acquired middle age with his first long trousers and had been dedicated to the commercial treadmill before he had bought a safety razor. He displayed all the virtues along the primrose path, and John Vallant was but a decorative figurehead.

Vallant started as the other spoke at his elbow. He had been looking down and was looking down at the pavement. "How quickly some news spreads!"

For the first time the young man noted that the street below was filling with a desultory crowd. He distinguished a knot of Italian laborers talking with excited gesticulations—a

poor pawn, a couple of cheap chestnuts for unscrupulous men whose ingenuity was now called on, perforce, to share in his pitiful epiphany. He had consented to be a figurehead and he had been made a tool. A red rage surged over him. No one had ever seen John Vallant with a face such a look as grew on it now.

He turned and without a word opened the door. The older man took a step toward him—he had a sense of danger electric forces in the air—but the door closed sharply in his face. He smiled grimly. "Not crooked," he said to himself, "merely callow. A well-meaning, unbusinesslike fellow, wholly surrounded by men who knew what they wanted." He shrugged his shoulders and went back to his chair.

Vallant plunged down to the street. He pushed past the guard door, and threading the crowd, made toward the curb, where his bulldog, with a bark of defiance, leaped upon the seat of a burlesqued car, rambling and vibrating with pent-up power. The driver, who in the sudden anxious crowd who knew nothing that was throbbing vital miracle, the chauffeur spick and span from shining cap-tiver to polished brass, had recognized the white face that went past, pelted it with muttered snorts. But he scarcely saw or heard them, as he stepped down to the wheel from the chauffeur's hand and threw on the gear.

"It's Very Good Living Abroad. There's a Best Leaving Tomorrow." smugged plaster, tools in hand—clothes, some hatless and with thin alpaca coats—all peering at the less front of the great building, and all, he imagined, with a shivering fear in their faces. As he watched, a woman, an elderly, round, and stout, with a coarse, dressed, run across the street, her handkerchief pressed to her eyes.

"The notice has gone up on the door," said the manager. "I see you to the police. Crowds are ugly sometimes."

Vallant drew a sudden sharp breath. The corporation down in the mire, with crowds at its doors ready to clamor for money entrusted to it, the aggregate savings of widow and orphan, the piteous hoarded sums earned

ENERGY FROM A SUGAR DIET

of lump sugar in the treatment of a man nearly eighty years old who was dying with a violent disease of the heart. The doctor, who had recommended medicines had failed one of the medals asked if there was any objection to feeding the sufferer lump sugar. The doctor replied that he had no objection. The man was given every four hours, and in a week he was a well man. Dr. Berreller recommended to one of the German medical societies the use of powdered sugar in the treatment of diabetes, which he had neglected cases. He says that the application of sugar to the feet part lessens the disagreeable odor and discharges. Furthermore, the use of sugar in the diet of patients improves all her hemorrhages, cures, indeed, unless you have had a long experience with cancer patients. As the latter is in the state of the internal combustion engine, so sugar is the fuel of the human machine. Sugar, he says, is the start of life, and man can produce more energy from sugar than from any other food. A distinguished British bacteriologist has lately proved the efficacy

of labor over which pinched sickly faces had burned the midnight oil.

The older man had turned back to the desk to draw a narrow typewritten slip of paper from a pigeonhole. "But I will!" he said, his attention given to the subsidiary companies recorded in your name. These are all of course, engaged in the larger future. You have, however, your private fortune. If you take my advice, by the way," he added significantly, "you'll make more of keeping that." The older man smiled. "What do you mean?" John Vallant asked him quickly.

The other laughed shortly. "A word to the wise is worth a pound of good living abroad. There's a boat leaving tomorrow."

A dull red spring into the younger face. "You mean—"

"Look at that crowd down there—you can hear them now. There'll be a legislative investigation, of course. And the devil'll get the blame!" He struck the desk-top with his hand. "Have you ever seen the bills for this furniture? Do you know what that amount will be? It's a rabbit's foot, a thousand—it's an old Persian. What do you suppose the parties will do to that? Do you think such things will be sold for their value?"

"His hand swept toward the window. "It's been going on for too many years, I tell you! And now suddenly it may be that the rabbit's foot will strike me—I'm not tall enough. You're a vice-president."

"Do you imagine that I knew these things?" he asked. "You're a man to whom you see to believe has been a deliberate wrecking?" Vallant looked over him, his breath coming fast, his hands shaking.

"You!" The manager laughed again—an unpleasant laugh that scraped the other's quivering nerves like his hand-dog's. "Oh, how do you think you? You've been too busy playing polo and winning bridge prizes. How many board meetings have you attended this year? Your vote is regarded as regular as clockwork. But you're supposed to know. The people down there in the street won't ask questions about patent-leather pumps and ponies; they'll want to hear about such things as rotten irrigation loans in the Stoney River Valley—marks an alkali desert there is the personal property of the president of this corporation."

Vallant turned a blank white face. "Sedwick?"

"Yes. You know his principle: 'It's all right to be honest, if you're not too damn honest.' He owns the Stoney River Valley bag and baggage. It was a big gamble and he lost."

Vallant was staring at the other with a strange look. Emotions to which he had no scientific name, but which had been a stranger were running through his mind, and other passions had him by the throat. Fool and doubly blind! The poor pawn, a couple of cheap chestnuts for unscrupulous men whose ingenuity was now called on, perforce, to share in his pitiful epiphany. He had consented to be a figurehead and he had been made a tool. A red rage surged over him. No one had ever seen John Vallant with a face such a look as grew on it now.

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He rose grimly and dragged his chair faster to the window. The night was hazy and he looked down over the darker one of roofs, barred like a gigantic checker-board by the shining lines of streets, to where the flashing electric signs and theater district laid their wide swath of colored glare. The manifold calls of the street and the buzz of trolleys made a full-toned background, subdued and far-away.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

He had suddenly remembered that it was his twenty-fifth birthday. All that he wanted. He had never borrowed from a friend or been dunned by an importunate tradesman. And he had never tried to earn a dollar in his life, as to current methods of making a living, he was as ignorant as a Pueblo Indian.

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NOT SPOILED BY POSITION

President of the French Republic Pleaded to Great Humble Companion of His Boyhood.

A pretty little incident that throws a pleasing light upon the character of the late President of France occurred recently at a banquet given by the French bar to President Poincaré.

At the close of the dinner M. Poincaré asked the waiter who had watched over his comfort. "Thank you, Jacques," he said quietly, and shook him by the hand. At the same time the president managed to slip a bank note into the waiter's palm. "I won't have it!" cried Jacques, and to the amusement and astonishment of the guests there ensued a friendly struggle between the waiter and the president of the republic.

M. Poincaré then the amicable dispute by pushing the note into a man's pocket and good-naturedly slipping him on the back. The waiter could not resist this sincere generosity, and finally, after another handshake, retired, wreathed in smiles.

"The white hand on the coverlet had beckoned to him and he had gone close to the bed standing very straight, his heart beating fast and hard.

"The word had been almost a whisper, very tense and anxious, very distinct. 'John, you're a little boy, and father is going away.'"

"The gray lips had smiled then, ever so little, and sadly. 'No, John.'"

"Take me with you, father! Take me with you when you go!"

His voice had trembled then, and he had had to gulp hard.

"Listen, John, for what I am saying is very important. You don't know what I mean now, but sometime you will." The whisper had grown strained and frayed, but it was still distinct. "I can't go to the Never Land. But you may sometime. If you . . . If you do, and if you find Washing-House, remember that the men who lived in . . . were fore you and me . . . were gentlemen. Whatever else they were, they were always that. Be . . . like them, John . . . will you?"

"Yes, father."

The old gentleman with the eyes-glasses had come forward then, hastily.

"Good-night, father—"

He had wanted to kiss him, but a strange cool hush had settled on the room and his father seemed all at once to have fallen asleep. And he had gone out, so carefully, on tiptoe, wondering, and suddenly afraid.

CHAPTER III.

The Turn of the Page.

John Vallant stirred and laughed, a little self-consciously, for there had been drops in his face.

Presently he took a check book from his pocket and began to figure on the stub, looking up with a wry smile. To come down to brass tacks, he muttered, "when I've settled everything (thank heaven, I don't owe my tailor) there will be a little matter of twenty-eight hundred dollars, a passé motor and my clothes between me and the breadline."

Everything else he had disposed of—everything but the four-footed commodity at his feet. "But I'd not sell you any old thing," he said softly, "not a single link of your friendly pink tongue; not for a beauty hundred."

He withdrew his careening hand and looked again at the check-stub. Twenty-eight hundred! He laughed bleakly. He had spent more than that in a month ago did he sherry! This morning he had been rich; tonight he was poor!

What could he do? He could not remember a time when he had not had

the jostling crowd crowded out into the square, watching a fund of sleek with girl on the arm of a gray-bearded man in black frock coat and picturesque broad-brimmed felt hat. She turned her eyes to him.

"So that," she said, "is John Vallant! I'd almost rather have missed Niagara Falls. I must write Shirley Danbridge about it. I'll send you a picture of him that I cut out of the paper."

"I reckon he's not such a bad lot," said her uncle, with a little frown. "Grand Central Station," he directed, with a glance at his watch. "and be quick out of it. We've just time to make our train."

Some hours later, in a larger office of a downtown sky-scraper, the newly-appointed director of the Vallant Corporation, a heavy, thick-set man with narrow eyes, sat beside a table on which lay a small black satchel with a padlock on its handle, whose contents—several bundles of crisp papers he had been turning over in his heavy hand. He frowned at the incriminating mass of figures and memoranda lay among them.

The check was still on his face when a knock came at the door, and a man entered. The newcomer was gray-haired, slightly stooped and lean-looking, with a thin nose and a pair of lips. He glanced in surprise at the littered table.

"Fargo," said the man at the desk, "do you notice anything queer about me?"

His friend grinned. "No, back to the office. It won't stop a nickel's worth."

"Hang the haberdashery! Read this—from young Vallant." He passed over a letter.

When the president turned back to the table he noticed the perplexed looks on the faces of the perplexed did not know what to make of the scene.

"You see," he explained simply, "I was at school with Jacques at Sarny."—YOUTH'S Companion.

They knew Geography. Since the Connecticut game law went into effect there has been much trouble about the state line over Rhode Island, Connecticut game wardens and protectors are scattered all along the line locking out for law violators who plead ignorance of the state line whereabouts.

Two Providence men were fined \$204 for each rabbit "holed" for they hadn't caught any.

One of the men said: "Them good honored rabbits appear to be well protected in New England; geographically, and coat us over the line so you darned loafers can get a chance to make money by roping 'em in."—East Killary (Conn.) Dispatch to N. Y. Herald.

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Keeps the Kitchen Cool and Fuel Bills Low

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"Certain'ly send 'em, Mandy," the lady replied scornfully. "Alleluiah!" exclaimed the cook. "His suitably am holdin' out well," Lippinott's Magazine.

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