The Real Man

By FRANCIS LYNDE

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JOHN SMITH, THE NEW FINANCIAL SECRETARY OF TIMANYONI DITCH COMPANY, MAKES A PLAN TO PUT THE CONCERN ON ITS FEET, BUT ENEMIES ARE HARD AT WORK TO THWART HIM.

Synopsis.—J. Montague Smith, cashier of Lawrenceville Bank and Trust company, society bachelor engaged to marry Verda Richlander, heiress, knocks his employer, Watrous Dunham, senseless, leaves him for dead and flees the state when Dunham accuses Smith of dishonesty and wants him to take the blame for embezzlement actually committed by Dunham. Several weeks later, Smith appears as a tramp at a town in the Rocky mountains and gets a laboring job in an irrigation ditch construction camp. His intelligence draws the attention of Williams, the superintendent, who thinks he can use the tramp, John Smith, in a more important place. The ditch company is in hard lines financially because eastern financial interests are working to undermine the local crowd headed by Colonel Baldwin and take over valuable property. Smith finally accepts appointment as financial secretary of Baldwin's company. He has already struck up a pleasant acquaintance with Corona Baldwin, the colonel's winsome daughter.

CHAPTER VIII.—Continued.

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"You followed?" queried Stanton.

"Yes, and when I got there the colonel was shut up in Williams' office with a fellow named Smith. When I got a place to listen in they were getting ready to quit, and the colonel was saying: 'That settles it, Smith; you've got to come over into—I didn't catch the name of the place—'and help us.'"

Again the gentleman with the sharp jaw took time for narrow-eyed reflection.

"You'll have to switch over from the colonel to this fellow Smith for the present, Shaw," he decided, at length. "You look him up and do it quick."

The young man glanced up with a faint warming of avarice in his sleepy eyes. "It'll most likely run into money—for expenses," he suggested.

"For graft, you mean," snapped Stanton. Then he had it out with this second subordinate in crisp English. "I'm onto you with both feet, Shaw; every crook and turn of you. More than that, I know why you were fired out of Maxwell's office; you've got sticky fingers. That's all right with me up to a certain point, but beyond that point you get off. Understand?"

Shaw made no answer in direct terms, but if his employer had been watching the heavy-lidded eyes, he might have seen in them the shadow of a thing much more dangerous than plain dishonesty: a passing shadow of the fear that makes for treachery when the sharp need for self-protection arises.

"I'll try to find out about the hobo," he said, with fair enough lip-loyalty, and after he had rolled a fresh cigarette he went away to begin the mining operations which might promise to unearth Smith's record.

It was ten o'clock when Shaw left the real-estate office in the Hophra House block. Half an hour earlier Smith had come to town with the colonel in the roadster, and the two half shut themselves up in the colonel's private room in the Timanyoni Ditch company's town office in the Barker building, which was two squares down the street from the Hophra house. Summoned promptly, Martin, the bookkeeper, had brought in his statements and balance sheets,

"Try to Find Out About the Hobo,"

and the new officer, who was as yet without a title, had struck out his plan of campaign.

"'Amortization,' is the word, colonel," was Smith's prompt verdict after he had gone over Martin's summaries. "The best way to get at it now is to wipe the slate clean and begin over again."

The ranchman president was chuckling soberly.

"Once more you'll have to show me, John," he said. "We folks out here in the hills are not up in the Wall street crinkles."

"You don't know the word? It means to scrap the old machinery to make room for the new," Smith explained. "In modern business it is the process of extinguishing a corporation; closing it up and burying it in another and bigger one, usually. This is what we must do with Timanyoni Ditch."

"I'm getting you, a little at a time," said the colonel, taking his first lesson in high finance as a duck takes to the water. Then he added: "It won't take much of a lick to kill off the old company, in the shape it's got into now. How will you work it?"

Smith had the plan at his fingers' ends. With the daring of all the perils had come a fresh access of fighting fitness that made him feel as if he could cope with anything.

"We must close up the company's affairs and then reorganize promptly and, with just as little noise as may be, form another company—which we will call Timanyoni High Line—and let it take over the old outfit, stock, liabilities and assets entire. You say your present capital stock is one hundred thousand dollars. This new company that I am speaking of will be capitalized at, say, an even half million. To the present holders of Timanyoni Ditch we'll give the new stock for the old, share for share, with a bonus of twenty-five shares of the new stock for every twenty-five shares of the old surrendered and exchanged. This will be practically giving the present shareholders two for one. Will that satisfy them?"

This time Colonel Dexter Baldwin's smile was grim.

"You're just juggling now, John, and you know it. Out here on the woolly edge of things a dollar is just a plain iron dollar, and you can't make it two merely by calling it so."

"Never you mind about that," cut in the new financier. "At two to one for the amortization of the old company we shall still have something like three hundred thousand dollars treasury stock upon which to realize for the new capital needed, and that will be amply sufficient to complete the dam and the ditches and to provide a fighting fund. Now then, tell me this: how near can we come to placing that treasury stock right here in Timanyoni Park? It's up to us to keep this thing in the family, so to speak; and the moment we go into other markets we are getting over into the enemy's country. I'm not saying that the money couldn't be raised in New York; but if we should go there, the trust would have an underhold on us, right from the start."

"I see," said the colonel, who was indeed seeing many things that his simple-hearted philosophy had never dreamed of; find then he answered the direct question. "There is plenty of money right here in the Timanyonis."

Smith nodded. He was getting his second wind now, and the race promised to be a keen joy.

"But they would have to be shown, you think?" he suggested. "All right; we'll proceed to show them. Now we can come down to present necessities. We've got to keep the work going—and speed it up to the limit; we ought to double Williams' force at once—put on a night shift to work by electric light."

The colonel blinked twice and swallowed hard.

"Say, John," he said, leaning across the table-desk; "you've sure got your nerve with you. Do you know our present bank balance is under five thousand dollars, and a good part of that is owing to the cement people!"

"Never mind; don't get nervous," was the reassuring rejoinder. "We are going to make it bigger in a few minutes, I hope. Who is your banker here?"

"Dave Kinzie of the Brewster City National."

"Tell me a little something about Mr. Kinzie before we go down to see him; just brief him for me, as a man, I mean."

The colonel was shaking his head slowly.

"He's what you might call a twenty-ton optimist, Dave is; solid, a little slow and sure, but the biggest boomer in the West, if you can get him started—believes in the resources of the country and all that. But you can't borrow money from him without security, if that's what you're aiming to do."

"Can't we?" smiled the young man who knew banks and bankers. "Let's go and see. You may introduce me to Kinzie as your acting financial secretary, if you like. Now one more question: What is Kinzie's attitude toward Timanyoni Ditch?"

"At first he was all kinds of friendly; he is a stockholder in a small way. But after a while he began to cool down a little, and now—well, I don't know; I hate to think it of Dave, but I'm afraid he's leaning the other way, toward these Eastern fellows. He tried to cover Stanton's tracks in the stock-buying from Gardner and Bolling."

"That is natural, too," said Smith, whose point of view was always unobscured in any battle of business. "The big company would be a duck takes to the water. Then he added: "It won't take much of a lick to kill off the old company, in the shape it's got into now. How will you work it?"

"By Janders!" said the colonel with an open smile; "I believe you'd just as soon tackle a banker as to eat your dinner; and I'd about as soon take a horsewhipping. Come on; I'll steer you up against Dave, but I'm telling you right now that the steering is about all you can count on from me."

It was while they were crossing the street together that Mr. Crawford Stanton had his third morning caller, a thickset, barrel-bodied man with little pigline eyes, closely cropped hair, a bristling mustache, and a wooden leg of the homemade sort. The men of the camps called the cripple "Peg-leg" or "Blue Pete" indifferently, though not to his face. For though the fat face was always relaxed in a good-natured smile, the crippled saloonkeeper was of those who kill with the knife.

Stanton looked up from his desk when the pad-and-click of the cripple's step came in from the street.

"Hello, Simms," he said, in curt greeting. "Want to see me? Sit down."

Simms threw the brim of his soft hat up with a backhanded stroke and shook his head. "It ain't worth while; and I gotta get back to camp. I blew in to tell you there's a fella out there that needs th' sandbag."

"Who is it?"

"Fella name' Smith. He's showin' 'em how to cut too many corners—pace-settin', he calls it. First thing they know, they'll get the concrete up to where the high water won't bu'st it out."

Stanton's laugh was impatient.

"Don't make any mistake of that, sort, Simms," he said. "We don't want the dam destroyed; we'd work just as hard as they would to prevent that. All we want is to have other people think it's likely to go out—think it hard enough to keep them from putting up any more money. Let that go. Is there any more fresh talk—among the men?" Stanton prided himself a little upon the underground wire-pulling which had resulted in putting Simms on the ground as the keeper of the construction-camp canteen. It was a fairly original way of keeping a listening ear open for the camp gossip.

"Little," said the cripple briefly. "This here blink-blank fella Smith's been telling Williams that I ort to be run off th' reservation; says th' booze puts the brake on for speed."

"So it does," agreed Stanton musingly. "But I guess you can stay a while longer. I have a notion that Smith's been sent here—by some outfit that means to buck us. If he hasn't any backing—"

The interruption was the hurried incoming of the young man with sleepy eyes and the cigarette stains on his fingers, and for once in a way he was stirred out of his customary attitude of cynical indifference.

"Smith and Colonel Baldwin are over yonder in Kinzie's private office," he reported hastily. "Before they shut the door I heard Baldwin introducing Smith as the new acting financial secretary of the Timanyoni Ditch company!"

CHAPTER IX.

When Greek Meets Greek.

Smith allowed himself ten brief seconds for a swift eye-measuring of the square-shouldered, stockily built man with a gray face and stubbly mustache sitting in the chair of authority at the Brewster City National before he chose his line of attack.

"We are not going to cut very deeply into your time this morning, Mr. Kinzie," he began when the eye-appraisal had given him his cue. "You know the history of Timanyoni Ditch up to the present, and—well, to cut out the details, there is to be a complete reorganization of the company on a new basis, and we are here to offer to take your personal allotment of the stock off your hands at par for cash. Colonel Baldwin has stipulated that his friends in the original deal must be protected, and—"

"Here, here—hold on," interrupted the bank president; "you're hitting it up a little bit too fast for me, Mr. Smith. Who are you, and whereabouts do you hold forth when you are at home?"

Smith laughed easily. "If we were trying to borrow money of you, we might have to go into preliminaries and particulars, Mr. Kinzie. We are not alone in the fight for the water rights on the other side of the river, as you know, and until we are safely fortified we shall have to be prudently cautious. What we want to know now is this: Will you let us protect you by taking your Timanyoni Ditch stock at par?"

Kinzie met the issue fairly. "I don't know you yet, Mr. Smith; but I do know Colonel Baldwin, here, and I guess I'll take a chance on things as they stand. I'll keep my stock."

The new secretary's smile was rather patronizing than grateful.

"As you please, Mr. Kinzie, of course," he said smoothly. "But I'm going to tell you frankly that you'll keep it at your own risk. I am not sure what plan will be adopted, but I assume it will be amortization and a retirement of the stock of the original company. The voting control of the old stock we already have, as you know."

The banker pursed his lips until the stubbly gray mustache stood out stiffly. Then he cut straight to the heart of the matter.

"You mean that there will be a majority pool of the old stock, and that the pool will ignore those stockholders who don't come in?"

"Something like that," said Smith pleasantly. And then: "We're going to be generously liberal, Mr. Kinzie; we are giving Colonel Baldwin's friends a fair chance to come in out of the wet. Of course, if they refuse to come in—if they prefer to stay out—"

Kinzie was smiling sourly.

"You'll have to take care of your own banker, won't you, Mr. Smith?" he asked. "Why don't you loosen up and tell a little more? What have you fellows got up your sleeve, anyway?"

At this, the new financial manager slacked off on the hawser of secrecy a little—just a little.

"Mr. Kinzie, we've got the biggest thing, and the surest, that ever came up Timanyoni Park; not in futures, mind you, but in facts already so good as accomplished. If it were necessary—as it isn't—I could go to New York today and put a million dollars behind our reorganization plan in twenty-four hours. You'd say so yourself if I were at liberty to explain. But again we're dodging and wasting your time and ours. Think the matter over—about your stock—and let me know before noon. It's rather cruel to hurry you so, but time is precious with us and—"

"You sit right down there, young man, and put a little of this precious time of yours against mine," said Kinzie, pointing authoritatively at the chair which Smith had just vacated. "You mustn't go off at half-cock, that way. You'll need a bank here to do business with, won't you?"

Smith did not sit down. Instead, he smiled genially and fired his final shot.

"No, Mr. Kinzie; we don't need a local bank—not as a matter of absolute necessity. In fact, on some accounts I don't know but that it would be better for us not to have one."

"Sit down," insisted the bank president; and this time he would take no denial. Then he turned abruptly upon Baldwin, who had been playing his part of the silent listener letter-perfect.

"Baldwin, we are old friends, and I'd trust you to the limit—on any proposition that doesn't ask for more than the straight-from-the-shoulder honesty. How much is this young friend of ours talking through his hat?"

"We Are Not Going to Cut Very Deeply."

"Not any, whatever, Dave. He's got the goods," Baldwin was wise enough to limit himself carefully as to quantity in his reply.

Again the banker made a comical bristle brush of his cropped mustache.

"I want your business, Dexter; I've got to have it. But I'm going to be plain with you. You two are asking me to believe that you've gone outside and dug up a new bunch of backers. That may be all right, but Timanyoni Ditch has struck a pretty big bone that maybe your new backers know about—and maybe they don't. You've had a lot of bad luck, so far; getting your land titles cleaned, and all that; and you're going to have more. I've—"

It was Smith's turn again and he cut in smartly.

The next installment describes a sharp clash between Stanton and Smith. The fight ceases to be merely a battle of wits and becomes deadly and desperate and bloody.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

ODD TRICKS OF THE BADGER

Even When Dog Gets Throat Hold He Can Give Good Account of Himself.

It appears that the pelt of an adult badger is extremely thick and difficult for a biting adversary to penetrate, and so loosely does the skin cover the body that the animal is, so to speak, able to turn almost around in its hide, says the Los Angeles Times.

Should a dog acquire a hold on the throat, the badger turns himself so that the dog's grip is on the back of the badger's neck, without having loosened his first hold. Then the badger secures a viselike grip upon some vulnerable portion of his enemy, and while his long tusks penetrate to the limit he digs and scratches with his front feet, that are furnished with claws almost as formidable and deadly as might be expected in an anteater of the dark continent.

He who has removed the pelt of a badger and is at all observing, does not wonder at the animal being sharp-bitten and that he is able to hang with bulldog tenacity when the formation and adjustment of its claws are noted. Neither is it much of a mystery how he manages to bore through the soil so rapidly that half a dozen men with shovels cannot overtake him, for he is a mass of cords and muscles, particularly in the neck, chest and shoulders, very similar in physical construction to the ground mole.

The badger toes inward sharply when traveling and always on the walk, twisting here and there very much like the movements of a skunk, while if it be in winter he makes a business of hunting buried dormant woodchucks.

He is a fur-bearer of rather coarse quality, and there is a great range of value in the pelts taken, all the way from 10 cents to $2 or more, depending upon the length of the coat. A badger is chiefly valuable when it has a long coat, so that the guard hairs can be plucked and used to make shaving brushes.

Roots Must Have Room.

The yield of cotton is dependent upon the number of flowers we are able to induce the plant to form, and root space is necessary to flowering. The cotton plant's normal rooting may occupy two square yards of earth, which is several times more than given it in practice, and the yield may often be reduced by this fact as the roots must interlap.

Proposing on Friday.

She (superstitious)—I should never propose on a Friday; it's unlucky.

He (cynical)—Not always. I once knew a fellow who did, and the girl refused him.

The HOME BEAUTIFUL

Flowers and Shrubbery—Their Care and Cultivation

A Field of Gladioluses.

SOME HARDY BULBS.

The lover of a beautiful garden must spare a corner, or strip of ground, for the hardy bulbs which come up from year to year with very little care, excepting the general care every flower lover gives her plants, such as keeping the weeds down, fertilizing the ground in the fall and loosening the earth in the springtime.

I find the Roman hyacinth will increase from year to year, if left in the ground.

My crocuses are planted in the lawn and are done blooming before the mowing machine is run over that part of the grass.

I have some hard, old-fashioned white tulips, the double kind, and these, with a few of the cottage garden tulips of brilliant colorings make a gay showing all through May.

Scilla Siberica is very satisfactory, being one of the first bright-blue flowers to greet us, for it comes in crocus time. Then there is the Scilla campanulata, or Spanish bluebell. These bulbs, grown in masses with snowdrops, grape and feathered hyacinths, are charming in effect.

The Sternbergia lutia is a bulb which gives up its blossoms in September, often extending into the latter part of November. A clump of them is very striking, the flowers being a pure, golden-yellow in color.

The most satisfactory bulb of all is the fleur de lys, iris or flags, the narcissi and the daffodils. The ground in which they are planted should not be fertilized, as this causes the bulbs to run to leaf and give but scanty blossoms.

Once in three years, in the fall, the daffodils, the narcissi, the fleur de lys need separating, and if grown in long rows of each flower the effect is beautiful and gratifying.

A great show can be made of groups of iris. There are several species of this gorgeous flower, and each species has many varieties—there is the Spanish, Japan and German iris, and several new varieties and novelties.

Mrs. Frank A. Vanderlip Cultivating Potatoes.

WAR WORK

In the call of the government for the people of the United States to do their bit for their country by planting food to be used to reduce the high cost of living and to help feed our allies, one of the first to respond to the call was Mrs. Frank Vanderlip, wife of the president of the City National bank, New York city. Mrs. Vanderlip is the leader of the Woman Suffrage party in Westchester, where the beautiful home of the Vanderlips is situated. Early in the spring the grounds around the vast estate were planted to potatoes. Neighboring suffragists helped in the work. Mrs. Vanderlip spending a certain portion of each day in the work of the garden. The picture taken shows Mrs. Vanderlip at work with the cultivator in one of the potato patches.

CLEARING THE FIELDS

Old fields which have been allowed to grow up in briers and brush are often very hard to reclean. When the ditch is taken off, such weeds as sassafras, greenbriers and wire briers keep sprouting, but if all such brush and briers are hacked down in August and September and burned as soon as they get dry and the land pastured with the sheep and cattle they will soon die out and the roots rot.

If sassafras and green briers are grubbed out they will sprout as long as the ground is stirred, but neither of them can stand pasturing without breaking the ground after they have been hacked down and burned over.

Many patches of greenbiers will burn when dry without going to the trouble of cutting them, and in such cases it saves labor by setting them on fire to kill them and burn the old briers out of the way.

Meat Diet and Bad Temper.

Do you know that meat eating is said to be responsible for bad temper? The philosophy of this is that meat is a stimulant, and that after the brief happy effect of this stimulant has worn off there comes a long effect of lethargy and irritability. All heavy meat eaters are said to have bad dispositions because they are always suffering from their food's aftermath. That is what the vegetarians affirm. Meat eaters consider the charge purely fanciful.

Paris Postwomen.

Paris, France, is putting its entire mail distribution system into the hands of women carriers. Experiments in two districts proved highly successful, so the plan is to be made general. Women made the rounds faster and delivered more mail in less time than men. Women carriers are to have a severely plain special uniform and are to be paid $1.19 a day more than men received before the war.

Daily Thought.

All material questions are of little importance in comparison with the sole object of our life: to preserve love amongst all men with whom we come in contact.—Tolstoy.

HARVESTING GREAT 1917 APPLE CROP

Volunteer Crews Are Now Being Organized Everywhere Over Country.

HOW BEST TO DO THE WORK

Main Point Is to Put Fruit Quickly Into Temporary Storage—Local Clubs Aid Federal Food Administration.

This year's apple crop will be harvested in most sections with volunteer pickers, men and women, boys and girls, who will be intelligent and interested, but very little quite unfamiliar with fruit picking. The crews are now being recruited all over the country by state councils of defense, chambers of commerce, women's organizations and other people anxious to help with the apple crop.

Each grower should now get in touch with the chamber of commerce, or some other representative business organization in his nearest town, tell how many pickers he will need, when he will need them, for how long, and what arrangements he can make for housing or boarding them.

When his crew of volunteer pickers reports for duty he must open a little school for a day or two, and give them practical instruction in their new work. Many of them perhaps have never climbed into an apple tree, and even those who have may not understand that apple picking is a kind of work that requires as much delicacy as gathering eggs.

Let the grower tell his pickers how the skin of an apple, or any other kind of fruit or vegetable, is like the tin that protects canned goods. As the tin that incloses a can of tomatoes guards the sterilized contents from the air, and as even a slight pinhole in this tin would allow the air to enter and carry germs of decay, so the skin of an apple protects its flesh, which is perfectly sterile, and the least cut, even a dent made by a finger nail, allows germs to enter and start decay. A cut so tiny that it can only be detected under the microscope at picking time will, nevertheless, start a germ invasion which will show up later when the apple is packed and put into storage.

For this reason great care must be taken in picking fruit. The grower should show their pickers how to grasp an apple and give it the skillful twist that separates it from the tree. He must caution them against dropping the apples carelessly in the boxes and baskets, and see that they have picking baskets and field boxes which are free from splinters and nails.

This year's crop will have to be managed along somewhat different lines in many sections. With a crew of trained pickers and packers it is customary to grade and pack much of the fruit as fast as it comes from the trees. There will probably be a shortage of packers, and many growers will have to devote all their efforts to picking the crop and getting it into temporary storage first, and then packing it later.

More good apples are spoiled every year by carelessness between the time they are picked and the time they are packed than in any other way. Fall nights are cool, but fall days are apt to be warm. Apples are left in the orchard several days and alternately cool and heat with the changes in temperature until their quality deteriorates. The proper way to care for apples is to put them into common storage as soon as they come from the tree. Almost any good tight building will answer for the temporary storage needed between picking and packing.

When fruit leaves the tree it contains vegetable heat just as an animal has animal heat, and as the carcass of an animal will spoil after killing unless it is properly cooled, so fruit will spoil unless cooled. With a tight shed, into which fruit can be carried direct from the orchard, the grower can use the cool nights of autumn to take the heat out of his fruit. Doors and windows of the temporary storage shed should be opened at night to admit plentiful currents of cool air, and when the sun comes up and the outside air grows warm again the storage place should be closed to exclude the warm outer air as much as possible, and keep the fruit nicely cooled. If apples are handled in this simple and sensible way they will have prime keeping quality and the work of grading and packing can be postponed for several weeks.

There is a fairly large apple crop throughout the country this year. It amounts to about two bushels for every man, woman and child in the United States. From the consumers' standpoint it is important to have as much of this fruit as possible go to market in fresh class condition, so that it may help us conserve wheat, meat, fats and other staple foods for our allies. From the producer's standpoint it is just as important to harvest the crop in the best condition because the size of our apple crop this year is such that only the best fruit will bring good prices.

Self-Defense.

"A man should never talk about what he doesn't understand."

"Sometimes," replied Senator Sorghum, "you're obliged to do so in self-defense. You get tired of listening to other people talk about things they don't understand."

Unconquerable Trait.

"What makes your husband so interested in reincarnation?"

"I don't know, unless it's his absent-mindedness. He is sure to want to come back after something he forgot."

A Diagnosis.

Kathryn—I was going to the assembly ball with Jack Huggins, but he had to fail it off on account of a severe cold.

Kittye—The cold must have settled in his feet.