

managing board. I am satisfied the investment is O.K.; if you consent I'll place our saving in this company.'

'Do as you wish, Jack. If we lose, you still have your salary and we can console ourselves with the fact that what we did was for Dot's sake.'

'For Dot's sake, then, we'll try.'

Breakfast over, Elaine soon had Dot prepared for school, and kissing her and Jack good-bye, set to work to make things tidy for the day.

After leaving Dot in safe keeping at the Academy, Jack sauntered off to the telegraph office, where he sent Clifford Hale the following telegram: 'Draw on me through Central Bank of this city for 4000 dollars. I'm with you. Jack Northrop.'

II.

James Northrop, senior member of Northrop and Co., brokers, sat in his office the next morning, a little in advance of his office clerks, figuring out a scheme that was to make him one of the richest men of the country. He had long desired to attain the highest pinnacle of financial success. Being a cool-blooded business man, by skilful manipulations and a straining of ethical methods, he had succeeded in gaining a strong position in the National Coal Company. His ambition was now to become the president of the company, a step that would gain for him an enviable position in the commercial world and numerous advantages to enlarge his bank account. Feeling sure of his business ability, he realised to secure the position was equivalent to accumulating the fortune of which he had long dreamed.

While his holdings were large, there was but one way to attain this end, and that was to secure the co-operation of another large stockholder so as to hold the balance of power. But whom could he influence? This was the question that was worrying his mind on this morning. It had caused him nights of sleepless worry. He must gain this position, thought he to himself, no matter at what cost. He was growing old, and this was the opportunity of all opportunities.

He scanned the list of stockholders carefully, but there was some objection to each; only one of them all might be induced to combine interests. The name of George Washburn appeared on the list. Old Northrop knew Washburn had lately retired from active business life and was not playing for position. But how to get Washburn over to his side? Washburn was a reticent fellow, very gruff and cold to everybody save his daughter Lillian, whom he worshipped.

Lillian Washburn was an excellent girl and a very desirable match, for she was the only child of one of the richest men of the city. For several years she had been regarded as the belle of her social set. She could count her admirers by the score, which was natural for one having both beauty and wealth, but she remained impassive to all proposals. Indeed, society said that Jack Northrop was the only one who could have succeeded in winning her; and now that Jack had willingly ostracised himself from the higher set by his lowly marriage, there were some who said that Lillian was hiding her grief under the mask of social gaiety, which was not at all improbable.

Old Northrop, even at his advanced age, was quite a society man, and, moving in the social set, had heard these rumors. He had often regretted Jack's marriage, and wishing to show Jack his displeasure had never called at his home, nor inquired of his home life. Elaine, on the other hand, who had a sense of pride, was aware of his uncle's feelings towards her, and took good care to keep aloof from Jack's office.

Knowing nothing of Jack's married life, old Northrop had heard society say that he was not a happy man. It was generally thought that he would some day return to his old friends. Some said that pride alone prevented him from returning into his old set, who would have gladly welcomed him, as he had been a general favorite. They all felt that some day he would realise the rash step he had taken by marrying beneath his station in life, secure a divorce (the natural outcome of such marriages), and return to his old moorings.

All of these rumors James Northrop eventually heard, and being business mad, blase, and knowing nothing of the value and power of love, he readily accepted them as true.

Again and again, as he sat at his desk that morning, did he turn scheme upon scheme through his mind; yet none of them seemed possible for some reason or other. At last, after taxing his mental powers to the very limit, and being driven to the last extremity, he decided on the only one that seemed possible to him. He must reach Washburn in a round-about way.

Why not force Jack to own up to his unhappy marriage and assist him in getting a divorce? Jack, being free, then he would turn to Lillian Washburn as his social equal and marry her. It would be an easy matter, with a little diplomacy, to combine interests. A great scheme, thought he. Jack might be stubborn at first in listening to his advice, but after his pride would have been overcome, he would surely thank his uncle for his help. A thought flashed across his mind that perhaps these rumors were false. But no, no, they could not be; this was not the first unequal match that had ended in this manner. He would try the plan at any cost. Here was the chance of his life. If he succeeded, it meant financial prestige and a quick rise in the commercial world. He could not, he would not allow this opportunity to slip through his fingers—the one thing he had dreamed of, had striven for his whole life. Jack must aid him, and James Northrop was determined to win at any cost.

III.

'Did you wish to see me, sir?' asked Jack as he entered his uncle's private office.

'Yes, Jack. I've a matter of importance to lay before you—a matter which concerns you.'

For a moment neither spoke; the old gentleman thinking how best to begin, the young man wondering what could be the matter.

'Now,' began the old man, 'I want you to give me your close attention, and I insist that you do not interrupt me, but hear me out.' Evidently the old man knew his nephew well, and wanted to be fully understood.

Jack remained silent, and the old man continued.

'You may be surprised when you find out that this business I wish to speak to you about is in regard to your domestic affairs. For some time I have been hearing of your domestic unhappiness; and for this reason I have sent for you. You know, I was always opposed to your marrying, because I felt that unhappiness would be your lot. Your social set is still waiting for you to return to them, for they look upon your marriage as I do—merely as the foolish act of a head-strong boy.'

'Now, if you wish to be free (and I have no doubt of that) I will help you. The boys say that your pride will keep you from acknowledging your error, but I know that when your happiness is at stake, you will think well over the matter, and allow reason to overcome your pride. I know at first you will resent my interference, but I cannot allow that to stand in the way of my duty towards you. Think well over this matter, and to-morrow I'll send for you, and we can look further into this affair.'

The old man was satisfied with the manner in which he placed the condition before his nephew. He spoke throughout in a low, kindly tone; for knowing the character of his nephew, he did not wish to appear as overlording him. Jack's silence seemed to him as proof of the truthfulness of his view of the matter. He thought that in spite of his admonition to keep silent, had he been wrong, Jack would have interrupted him before he would have had time to finish speaking.

Jack, on the other hand, was completely thrown off his guard. This was the first time his uncle had ever spoken to him of his marriage since his wedding day. Once or twice during his uncle's conversation he was on the point of interrupting, but respect for his uncle made him keep his peace.

'I assure you, uncle, said Jack after he had gained his composure, 'that I am perfectly happy with my