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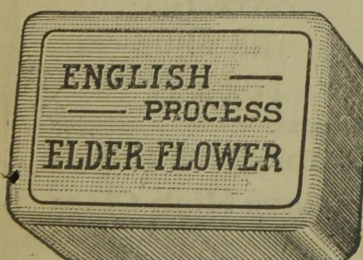
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The Riverman

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"I came down with Jane and Mrs. Hubbard to see Mr. Hubbard off on the boat for Milwaukee last night," she told him. "Of course we had to wait over Sunday. Mrs. Hubbard and Jane had to see some relative or other, but I preferred to take a walk."

"Where are you staying?" asked Orde.

"At the Bennetts'."

They said little more until the Bennetts' gate was reached. Orde declined to go in.

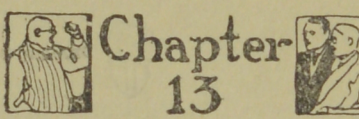
"I want to thank you," she said. "You did not once act as though you thought I was silly or crazy. And you didn't try, as all the rest of them would, to act silly too. You couldn't have done it. Oh, you may have felt it—I know!" She smiled one of her quaint and quizzical smiles. "But men aren't built for foolishness. They have to leave that to us. You've been very nice this afternoon, and it's helped a lot. Good night."

Orde, however, walked back to the hotel in a black rage with himself over what he termed his imbecility. As he remembered it he had made just one consecutive speech that afternoon.

"Joe," said he to Newmark, "what's the plural form of Incubus? Isn't it 'busses'?"

"Incubi," answered Newmark.

"Thanks," said Orde gloomily.



"I HAVE Heinzman's contract all drawn," said Newmark the next morning, "and I think I'll go around with you to the office."

They found the little German awaiting them. Newmark immediately took charge of the interview.

"I have executed here the contract and the bonds secured by Mr. Orde's and my shares of stock in the new company," he explained.

Heinzman reached his hands for the papers, beaming over his glasses at the two young men. As he read, however, his smile vanished.

"Vat is this?" he inquired, crispness in his voice. "You told me," he accused Orde, "that you were not prepared to break out the rollways. You told me you would expect me to do that for myself. Well, why do you put in this?" reading from the paper in his hand.

"In case said rollways belonging to said parties of the second part are not broken out by the time the drive has reached them, and in case on demand said parties of the second part do refuse or do not exercise due diligence in breaking out said rollways, the said parties of the first part shall themselves break out said rollways, and the said parties of the second part do hereby agree to reimburse said parties of the first part at the rate of a dollar per thousand board feet."

"That is merely to protect ourselves," struck in Newmark.

"But," exploded Heinzman, his face purpling, "a dollar a thousand is absurd!"

"Of course," agreed Newmark. "We expect it to be. It is intended as a penalty in case you don't break out your own rollways in time."

"I will not stand for such foolishness!" pounded Heinzman.

"Very well," said Newmark crisply, reaching for the contract.

But Heinzman clung to it.

"It is absurd," he repeated in a milder tone. "See, I will strike it out." He did so with a few dashes of the pen.

"We have no intention," stated Newmark, with decision, "of giving you the chance to hang up our drive."

Heinzman caught his breath.

"So that is what you think!" he shouted. He tore the contract in pieces and threw it in the wastebasket. "Get out of here!" he cried.

Orde's hands twitched nervously.

"You to refuse our offer?"

"Refuse! Yes—yes and your whole capoodle!" yelled Heinzman.

Once in the open street Orde drew a deep breath of relief.

"Whew!" said he. "That was a terror! We've gone off the wrong foot that time."

Newmark was amused.

"You don't mean to say that fooled you!" he marveled.

"What?" asked Orde.

"It was all rubbish. He saw we had spotted his little scheme, and he had to retreat. It was as plain as the nose on your face. We've got an enemy on our hands in any case and one we'll have to look out for. He'll try to make trouble on the river. Perhaps he'll try to block the stream by not breaking his rollways."

The partners hunted out the little frame building in which Johnson conducted his business.

"I see no use in it," said Johnson.

"I can run me own without help from any man."

"Which seems to settle that!" said

Newmark to Orde after they had left.

"Now," said Newmark as they trudged back to their hotel, "this proposition of Heinzman's has given me an idea. I'm not going to try to sell this stock outside, but to the men who own timber along the river. Then they won't be objecting to the tolls, for if the company makes any profits part will go to them. I'll take these contracts to show we can do the business, and I'll see about incorporation and get a proper office and equipments. Of course we'll have to make this our headquarters."

"I suppose so," said Orde a little blankly. After an instant he laughed. "Do you know, I hadn't thought of that!"

"Also," went on Newmark calmly. "I'll buy the supplies to the best advantage I can."

"And I?" inquired Orde.

"Get the booms built and improve the river. Begin to get your crew. You can start right off. We have my money to begin on."

Orde laughed.

"My! She's a nice big job, isn't she?" he cried joyously.

Chapter 14

ON his return home late Monday afternoon Grandma Orde informed the river boss with a shrewd twinkle that she wanted him surely at home the following evening.

"I've asked three or four of the young people for a candy pull," said she.

"Who, mother?" asked Orde.

"Your crowd—the Smiths, Collinses, Jane Hubbard and Her," said Grandma Orde.

The young people straggled in at an early hour after supper. Orde stepped into the hall to help them with their wraps. He was surprised as he approached Carroll Bishop to lift her cloak from her shoulders to find that the top of her daintily poised head, with its soft, fine hair, came well below the level of his eyes. Somehow her poise, her slender grace of movement and of attitude, had lent her the impression of a stature she did not possess.

To be Continued

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