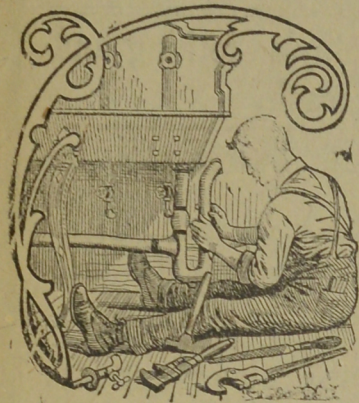


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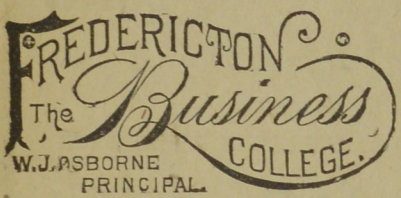
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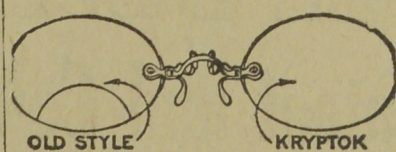
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CAPTAIN CY'S BIG FIST STRUCK HIM FAIRLY BETWEEN THE EYES.

Pard, you keep your nose out of this, d'you see! You mind your own business. I won't go in to hurt her any."

The captain paid no attention to him.

"Yup, I know him," he said grimly. Then he added, pointing toward the lighted window of the house ahead: "You—Smith, you go in there and stay there! Trot! Don't make me speak twice."

But Mr. Smith was too far gone with anger and the "spirits" raised by Tad Simpson to heed the menace in the words.

"Smith, hey?" he sneered. "Oh, yes, Smith! Well, Smith ain't goin', d'you see! He's goin' to do what he pleases. I reckon I'm on top of the roost here! I know what's what! You can't talk to me. I've got rights, I have, and"—

"Blast your rights!" "What? What? Blast my rights, hey? Oh, yes! Think because you've got money you can cheat me out of 'em, do you? Well, you can't! And how about the other part of those rights? S'pose I walk right into that house and"—

"Stop it! Shut up! You'd better not!"

"And into that bedroom and just say, 'Emmie, here's your'—"

He didn't finish the sentence. Captain Cy's big fist struck him fairly between the eyes, and the back of his head struck the wall with a "smack." Then, through the fireworks which were illuminating his muddled brain, he heard the captain's voice:

"You low down, good for nothin' scamp!" growled Captain Cy. "All this day I've been hatin' myself for the way I've acted to you. I've hated myself and been tryin' to spunk up courage to say 'It's all off!' But I was too much of a coward, I guess. And now the Lord Almighty has made me say it. You want your rights, do you? So? Then get 'em if you can. It's you and me for it, and we'll see who's the best man. Teacher, if you're ready I'll walk home with you now."

Mr. Smith was not entirely cowed by the captain.

"You go!" he yelled. "Go ahead! And I'll go to a lawyer's tomorrow. But tonight, and inside of five minutes, I'll walk into that house of yours and get my"—

The captain dropped Miss Dawes' arm and strode back to where his antagonist was sitting in the dust of the walk. Stooping down, he shook a big forefinger in the man's face, and his eyes gleamed ominously.

"You've been out west, they tell me," he whispered sternly. "Yes? Well, out west they take the law into their own hands sometimes, I hear. I've been in South America, and they do it there too. Just so sure as you go into my house tonight and touch—well, you know what I mean—just so sure I'll kill you like a dog, if I have to chase you to Jericho. Now, you can believe that or not. If I was you I'd

WHITTAKER'S PLACE

Teasing the frightened schoolmistress by the arm once more, he walked away. Mr. Smith said nothing till they had gone some distance. Then he called after them.

"You wait till tomorrow!" he shouted. "You just wait and see what'll happen tomorrow!"

Captain Cy was silent all the way to the gate of the perfect boarding house. Miss Dawes was silent likewise, but she thought a great deal. At the gate she said:

"Captain Whittaker, I'm ever so much obliged to you. I can't thank you enough."

He hesitated, then said:

"Don't try, then. That's what you said to me about the cow."

She gazed worriedly at him.

"But I'm almost sorry you were the one to come. I'm afraid that man will get you into trouble. Has he—can he—What did he mean about tomorrow? Who is he?"

The captain pushed his cap back from his forehead.

"Teacher," he said, "there's a proverb, ain't there, about lettin' tomorrow take care of itself? As for trouble—well, I did think I'd had trouble enough in my life to last me through, but I callate I've got another guess. Anyhow, don't you fret. I did just the right thing, and I'm glad I did it. If it was only me I wouldn't fret, either. But there's"—He stopped, groaned and pulled the cap forward again. "Good night," he added and turned to go.

Miss Dawes leaned forward and detained him.

"Just a minute, Cap'n Whittaker," she said. "I was a little prejudiced against you when I—here, I was told that you got me the teacher's position, and there was more than a hint that you did it for selfish reasons of your own. But I've had to judge people for myself in my lifetime, and I've made up my mind that I was mistaken about you. I should like to apologize. Will you shake hands?"

She extended her hand. Captain Cy hesitated.

"Hain't you better wait a spell?" he asked. "You've heard that swab call me partner. Hain't?"

"No; I don't know what your trouble is, of course, and I certainly shan't mention it to any one. But, whatever it is, I'm sure you are right and it's not your fault. Now will you shake hands?"

The captain did not answer. He merely took the proffered hand, shook it heartily and strode off into the dark.

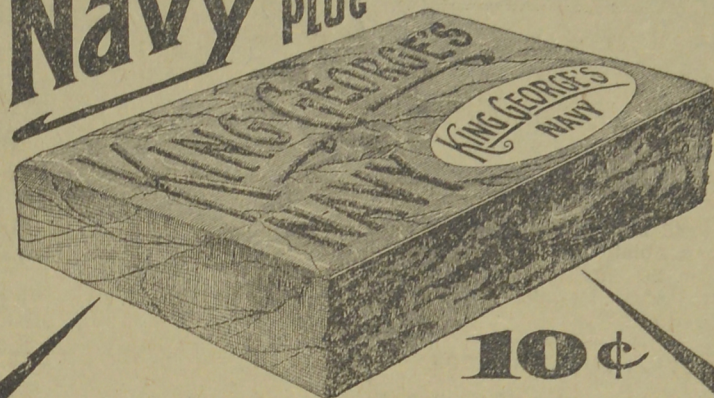
(To be Continued)



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