

GRAFT

JOE MITCHELL CHAPPLÉ

Each Episode Suggested by a Prominent Author
Serialization by HUGH WEIR and JOE BRANDT
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SYNOPSIS.

Dudley Larnigan, district attorney, because of his fight on the vice and liquor trusts, is killed by an agent of a secret society, the committee of fifteen. The fight is continued by his son, Bruce, who is elected district attorney, and by another son, Tom. Bruce is in love with Dorothy Maxwell, whose father is head of the insurance trust.

NINTH EPISODE

The Insurance Swindlers

Suggested by JOE MITCHELL CHAPPLÉ, Author of "Heart Throbs."

ACCIDENTS at the Great Eastern lumber mills were of so frequent occurrence that when Big Jim Blake was felled under a heavy, collapsing timber and picked up for dead the affair did not cause more than a passing ripple in the affairs of the great establishment. The management of the Great Eastern has a habit of smothering the news of accidents—when their employees were the victims. It was in the little white cottage on Elm street, near the factory yard, that the tragedy struck home. The sadly smiling woman, with the two chubby children clinging to her skirts, who greeted the gruff workman sent ahead with the news of the accident, jabbed for a moment at her eyes with a corner of her apron and prepared to receive the motionless body in the automobile ambulance.

"Jim!" she cried. "Jim, my Jim!" The tired eyes in the white face slowly opened. "Thank God, Martha, for the insurance! It will come in handy for us now!" She smiled bravely back at him. The insurance! How like the big, unselfish nature of Jim to think of the insurance and protection for her and the kiddies first! And so at 10 o'clock the next morning, when it became apparent that Jim Blake was doomed to a long siege in bed, if indeed he were to recover with his life, she put on her best Sunday bonnet and shawl and haltingly asked her way to the big brown stone building which housed the



Tom Changes Clothes With the Negro Bell Boy.

Accident and Life Insurance company. It was a big building and the offices of the insurance company within were very glittering and very pretentious, but a black lettered sign boldly announced that the company had just passed into the hands of a receiver. Mrs. Blake started back with a gasp—the kind of dry sob which comes to a woman only under the most poignant distress. The insurance company a failure! And all the little savings of three years swept away! But this was not the worst. How was the Blake family to exist during the long weeks ahead? How were Jim's doctor bills to be paid?

A strong, cheery voice spoke at Mrs. Blake's shoulder. "Is there anything I can do for you, madam?" The little woman whirled to look into a frankly smiling pair of blue-gray eyes set in a tanned, resolute face, and Tom Larnigan, for the speaker was he, removed his hat and offered his arm.

"Let us go some place where I can talk to you," he said quietly. "I have an idea that your story is only one of many which I have heard today. You see, I am government special officer investigating just such frauds as I strongly suspect the company is attempting to perpetrate now on an innocent public." He threw back the lapel of his coat and showed the little silver star of government authority. Mrs. Blake unhesitatingly followed his

directions. Almost before she realized it she was sobbing out her story. "You must let me take the place of the insurance company," he insisted. "How much did your policy call for?" She hesitated. "Twenty-five dollars a week for three months in case of disability from accident." "Here is \$100. I will see you before that is exhausted, and we will see what we can do for your husband." He rose. "Keep up your courage, Mrs. Blake. I am sure that I can help you."

"How can I ever thank you?" "Don't try." Tom smiled again as she turned away, but as her white little figure vanished the smile faded from his face. He had work to do—grim work. The company was one of the strongest branches of the so-called insurance trust and, as such, deemed itself above the law, immune from legal investigation. Tom turned finally away, his hands deep in his pockets, his face wrinkled in somber thought. He did not notice the skulking figure in the doorway of the building which glided unostentatiously after him. The fifteen kept their audacious antagonist under surveillance night and day.

Reaching his rooms, Tom saw in a newspaper a challenge from the very concern that was the object of his investigations. "The Accident and Life Insurance Company Invites Any Investigation of Its Books and Records From Any Accredited Source."

He knew that Roger Maxwell, father of Dorothy, the fiancée of his brother, Bruce, was the guiding spirit of the concern. Was Roger Maxwell implicated in a plot to defraud the public? Tom shuddered and threw the newspaper from him. He would take the insurance men at their word, and if there was crooked work, heaven help them! Had Tom Larnigan been present at a gathering of the remaining leaders of the fifteen in their private office that afternoon he might have been a shade less resolute in his sudden determination. Stanford Stone, as usual, was in the presiding chair, and it was his curly grim voice which started the purpose of the session.

"Larnigan is on the trail of the insurance trust, gentlemen. Unless we get him first he is certain to deal us another disastrous blow. I suggest that we leave Tom Larnigan's fate in the hands of four picked gun men whom I have selected for their discretion and marksmanship. Larnigan cannot escape them. They have orders to follow him to the death. If our man escapes, Brother Maxwell, the crisis must be met by you in this instance as the most interested party."

Roger Maxwell staggered as he rose from his chair, and his face was haggard when he passed through the door. Behind him Stanford Stone smiled cynically at his retreating figure. As Tom Larnigan left his hotel in a taxicab to visit Ben Travers he noticed that two men were following him. Once out of sight, Tom spoke to the chauffeur.

"I want you to change places with me for an hour," he said coolly, showing a twenty dollar bill. "It's a joke on some friends."

For a moment the man stared, and then he winked. Three minutes later Tom, in the elevator and cap of the chauffeur, drove slowly up to the entrance of the hotel where Ben Travers had his rooms, descended from his seat and entered the building.

The two gun men fell back with curses when they found the driver inside the taxicab. Travers welcomed Tom warmly and announced that he had bought the Daily Independent to fight graft. Tom then changed clothes with a negro bellboy and walked out to the taxicab with a trunk on his shoulders, while the two gun men, three feet away, smoked serenely, unconscious that their victim was at their elbows. For a moment Tom debated whether or not to enter the taxicab himself, but instead walked around the corner of the hotel and successfully eluded his pursuers. He at once proceeded to the Accident and Life Insurance company's offices and pushed his way into Roger Maxwell's room.

"I have come to see your books," said Tom curtly, showing his star. "I would like to start my investigation at once."

For a moment Maxwell continued his wild stare, and then he gathered himself together with an effort. "Certainly," he stammered, pressing a button, which called a secretary. "Show this man to the vaults, Jones," he ordered as the call was obeyed. Tom bowed and followed his conductor outside. Hardly had the door closed when Maxwell picked up his telephone. "Is that you, Stone?" He whispered hoarsely when his connection was established. "Young Larnigan is here to see the books. He has escaped our trap. What shall I do?" "Where is he now?"

"On his way to the vault."
"Let him get inside, then, and close the door!" was the curt answer.
"Close the door?" echoed Maxwell dully.

"Certainly. It is equipped with a time lock, of course. You can say it was an accident. It will be hours before it can be opened again."

Roger Maxwell hung back the receiver and paced the floor, with his face bathed in cold perspiration. It would be deliberate murder! Maxwell approached the vault, glanced stealthily over his shoulder and then lurched toward the heavy door. There was a clang of metal and then a hoarse cry of dismay from the clerk at the nearby desk, who sprang forward just in time to catch Maxwell's reeling form.

"For God's sake, what have you done, Mr. Maxwell? Tom Larnigan is inside!" "It was an accident," stammered Maxwell. "Get help at once. Don't stand there staring!" Hours later when three experts from the safe concern opened the vault they found the body of Tom Larnigan stretched on the floor. A physician, who had been hastily summoned, knelt over the form and shook his head solemnly. "Dead," he said.

Meantime, the evening newspapers on the streets were shrieking the latest sensational developments in the Larnigan case, and the story of the "accident" in the offices of the insurance company, which had resulted so disastrously. Bruce Larnigan, cov-



"Go away!" he moaned.

lescing from the injuries, which for a time had threatened an untimely death, crumpled the paper convulsively. "The scoundrels!" he hissed. "The murderous scoundrels!" There was no doubt in his mind as to the cause of the tragedy and its purpose. "But I'll have them yet! I'll hound each one to his grave or prison if it needs the remainder of my life to do it!"

Had any one been fated to look on Roger Maxwell at that moment the spectacle presented by the usually spruce, dignified looking insurance president would have been a shock. Maxwell, huddled over his desk, was seeking, as a last resort to ease his conscience of its burden, by telling the truth to a dead man, whose lips could never open against him in real life. Summoning a messenger the president directed the boy to carry the envelope to the Larnigan home. It was not until then that Roger Maxwell prepared to leave his office.

At the Larnigan cottage the occupants were clustered in the living room, listening with bated breath for the rumble in the street which should announce the arrival of the black wagon with the body of the son and brother. But hour succeeded hour without the expected sound. Bruce was on the point of persuading his mother to retire when a hurried step sounded outside, the front door was flung open, and Bruce was facing his brother Tom.

Tom grinned at the other's stare and flung his arms over his mother's shoulders. "It takes a hard knock to kill a Larnigan," he chuckled. "Suspended animation, old man. I looked dead enough, but the doctor suspected the true facts and managed to bring me around in his office." A half hour later Tom was summoned to the door by a peal of the bell. A messenger boy extended a long envelope. It was the confession of Roger Maxwell—the confession that had never been meant for living eyes. Tom caught his hat from the rack and let himself softly out of the front door. He was determined if possible to keep the confession from Bruce—Bruce who would give his life to avoid giving Dorothy Maxwell pain.

Roger Maxwell, in his library at midnight, started to his feet with a cry that was almost a shriek. Tom Larnigan stood before him. "Go away!" he moaned. "Go away!" Slowly, accusingly, Tom extended the sheets of Maxwell's confession. Maxwell rumbled to the floor. Tom darted to his side just as Dorothy entered the room. "I fear your father is very ill," he said gently. "Better call a doctor."

"But—but—how?" Dorothy stammered. "I will explain all later," said Tom evasively. The early morning newspapers carried the news of the apoplectic seizure of Roger Maxwell and announced that his life was despaired of. Bruce hurried to the Maxwell home. Dorothy met him with a sad shake of her pretty blond head as he sought to take her in his arms.

"Not now," she said, motioning him away. Without a word Bruce turned and made his way back to the street. How was it all to end? [Episode No. 10 next week.]

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

Lesson XII.—Second Quarter, For June 18, 1916.

THE INTERNATIONAL SERIES.

Text of the Lesson, Acts xvi, 19-24. Memory Verses, 33, 34—Golden Text, Acts xvi, 31—Commentary Prepared by Rev. D. M. Stearns.

In verses 19-18 of our lesson chapter we read of an evil spirit possessing a woman who, as she followed Paul and his friends, cried out, "These men are the servants of the Most High God, who show unto us the way of salvation." She continued to do this many days, but Paul, being grieved by even so good and true a testimony from such a source and knowing her to be controlled by an evil spirit, commanded the spirit to come out of her in the name of Jesus-Christ, and he did. It was certainly strange to hear such a testimony from such a source, but an evil spirit in the synagogue at Capernaum one day when Jesus was present cried out, "I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God!" And Jesus commanded the spirit to come out of the man (Mark 1, 23-26).

Truth may be talked without being known in the heart, but the Lord reads the heart and does not want testimony from His enemies. Knowing the truth about the Lord Jesus does not save any one, yet it may be that many think they are saved because they believe that Jesus lived and died and rose again and that He is the Son of God. But it is he that hath the Son of God that hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life. Only such as receive Him become children of God (1 John v, 12; John 1, 12).

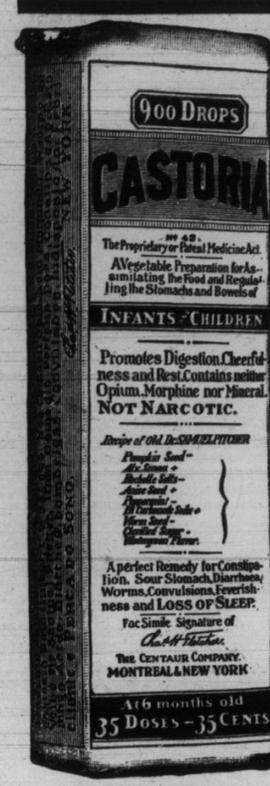
When those who employed this woman and made money by her saw that this source of income was taken from them they incited a riot against Paul and Silas and had them beaten and cast into prison, and the jailer, having received a charge to keep them safely, put them in the inner prison and made their feet fast in the stocks (verses 19-24). There are some things right on the surface of this record, and one is that people are apt to grow very angry if they are making money wrongfully and their business is interfered with. Compare the riot of the silversmiths at Ephesus in chapter xix, and then think of the opposition of the liquor dealers and all who dishonor Jesus Christ to the work and teaching of Rev. William Sunday and all true evangelists; also the opposition of those who profit by graft to those who desire righteousness.

Then notice that if you won't let the devil help you he will take pains to show you how he can hate you and persecute you. Compare in Ezra iv, 15, the decided opposition of those who were not permitted to help in the work. There are still those who are ready to help in many a good work if they may belong to the devil while they do it. But if asked to renounce the devil and to receive the Lord Jesus and put their trust in His great sacrifice as the Son of God, then one is apt to witness the enmity of the carnal mind against God.

How grand was the victory of faith in these men of God, who, with sore and bleeding backs and feet in the stocks, could praise the God whose they were and whom they served and talk with Him in heaven from their prison! Not only did the other prisoners hear them praising God, but they were heard in heaven, and suddenly the earth was shaken, and the prison, too; prison doors were opened and every one's bonds loosed (verses 25, 26). Oh, how great and wonderful is our God, the God of Israel, who only doest wonders! (Ps. lxxii, 18, 19.) As some one has said, these men had not influence enough on earth at Philippi to save them from this shameful treatment (1 Thess. ii, 2) and from prison, but they had influence enough in heaven to shake the earth. It was midnight when they prayed and sang praises, but the God of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps; He watches over His people night and day (Ps. cxxi, 4; Isa. xxvii, 3).

Not only was the prison shaken, but the keeper was so shaken when he saw the prison doors open that he would have killed himself if Paul had not cried out, "Do thyself no harm, for we are all here!" He was shaken deep down in his soul, too, for, falling down trembling before Paul and Silas, he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Then did Paul at this unexpected midnight service speak to him and to his house the word of the Lord, and they believed—that is, they received the Lord Jesus Christ—and, being saved, they confessed Christ in baptism and were all filled with rejoicing. The second saved household at Philippi (verses 14, 15, 27-34).

Reading of saved households, I always think of the Lord's word to Noah, "Come thou and all thy house," and I find great encouragement to believe that the Lord still loves to save households. It would seem that before the baptism those poor scarred backs were made more comfortable, and then what a love feast they must have had in the jailer's house, and what joy there was in heaven as well as on earth! Next morning those who had imprisoned the apostles wanted to let them go privately, but Paul insisted upon a public acquittal, which was granted them, and after a call upon Lydia they departed.



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"Get the observer's report," was his order. And through a field telegraph near by came the welcome news that the shot had scored a hit. Then I saw a British 9.2—a heavy, short-barrelled gun of semi-howitzer type—in action. The lieutenant here also wore one of the giddy Charlie Chaplin moustaches, and was as cool as if he had been to the wars for years. As a matter of fact, less than two years ago he was a junior clerk in a big London bank."

Sarolea's Forecast.

Charles Sarolea, who seems to have taken the place of the late William T. Stead as a prophet of events of mighty moment, describes in London Everyman what he characterizes as the German drama of the "Delirium of Greatness." Two acts have passed, he says, "the delirium of persecution and the delirium of violence," and they are now in "the grip of the suicidal mania," are approaching the stage of "mental depression and melancholia" which will be followed "as in every case of progressive paranoia, by political suicide." He predicts that a German civil war will probably end the world war.

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