POOR DOCUMENT

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GOVERNOR-GENERAL OF THE GINGER GROUP, - By W. D. Nesbit.

It makes no difference what sort of villainy you are engaged in, whether it be harmless or otherwise, one John Henry Nemesis is camping on your trail and he is going to come stampeding into your camp any morning. Whether your particular piece of craftiness be love or business, you may put an N. B. against the footnote that J. H. Nemesis, professional avenger and dealer in just deserts at retail and wholesale, has his eye on you.

These sage reflections are suggested by the meteoric career of Oscar B. Higberry, erstwhile Governor-General of the Ginger Group and at present a citizen of parts unknown. A crumpled atlas, a jealous rival, and his own overreaching ambition combined to invite the concussion which occurred in the region of his cervical vertebrae at the moment when he thought he was on the pinnacle of success bowing to encores.

Oscar B. Higberry had been by turns real estate agent, book agent, lightning rod agent, oil well promoter, and editor, and had concluded that one who was raised a pet should never soil his hands by plebian toil. Had money grown on trees, he would have induced some confiding stranger to pick it for him, and would have compelled the stranger to pluck it from the side of the tree which was not furnishing shade for him at the moment.

That he and Granville Stodworthy were brother editors of the Green Center Gazette and were also firm rivals for the hand and affections of Miss Grace Fillingham seemed to him no reason why he should avoid discussing the future with Stodworthy. Higberry never discussed the past. He forgot it, and expected you to do the same. As to the present, it was getting away too rapidly to merit much consideration from him. It was the future—his future—that got his best thought and study. What to do and whom to do tomorrow were his first and second thoughts, and usually they were provocative of tangible results.

He had been an editor two weeks, having matched his experience against Stodworthy's money, when the endless routine palled upon him. There was not enough excitement about the life. In Green Center it was almost impossible to find out anything which could be printed in such style as to compel the man written up to come in and argue with, or even fight, the editor. The only fight they had to record was one in which Stodworthy had been the lucky man. Higberry arrived on the scene after Stodworthy had contracted a black eye and the irate subscriber had hurried home to tell the folks about the sanguinary contest. It is always a sanguinary contest to the man who wins; to the other fellow it is a brutal, uncalled-for attack.

"Odd how women admire a fighter," Higberry said.

Stodworthy gloomily poked his pen to the bottom of the inkwell and fished out a scrap of blotting paper.

"'Specially," Highberry went on, "if he wins, or if he loses. A woman would just as soon sympathize as admire. Ever notice that?"

"Can't say that I have," Stodworthy replied.

"Well, if I'd had your advantages, I'd been taking notice. I only wish I'd had the chance you've had with Miss Fillingham. Bet you I'd have made her think that black eye was garnered in her defense. Why, I," he straightened up and patted the table with the flat of his hand, "would have played that black eye so strong she would have wanted me to have a black eye all my life. Stod., you're dead slow."

Stodworthy glared gloomily at him.

"You're dead slow," Higberry retown's dead slow, and if I stay here asserted. "You're dead slow; this I'll be dead slow. I'm going to move on."

The edge of a smile found its way into the mingled sienna and ultramarine blue of Stodworthy's cheek.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"I'm going to get a government job."

"Civil service?"

"Not on your confiding disposition! Nay, nay, my cheerful gazelle! Me for the large fat jobs that go to the favored few and come to you because you see them before the next man knows they exist."

"But what about the paper?"

"I take a six months' vacation, and you run the paper, and when I come back I'll continue to assume my share of the debts. That's fair. If I don't make good in six months—if I don't show you the good, hard cash to settle all the debts and put the paper in good seling condition, then I'll let you go away for six months, and when you come back I'l guarantee an assortment of liabilities seldom equalled and never excelled."

The only alluring feature of the proposition to Stodworthy was that Higberry, his rival, would be out of the running for half a year. This thought even made his injured eye cease throbbing for the moment. Had he hesitated, Higberry would have gone right on arguing until he agreed.

Next morning Stodworthy found on his desk a penciled note of farewell. Also, on the floor near Higberry's desk he found an atlas map of the world on Mercator's propection. It had pencil marks and dots all about New Zealand and the adjacent waters. He threw it in the waste basket, thinking nothing of it at the time. Stodworthy idly wondered where Higberry had gone, but from that musing he turned his mind to Miss Fillingham. Stodworthy could think of but one thing at once; Higberry had the faculty of keeping his mind on as many things as he wanted to. For the next two months Stodworthy let the paper gather more debt while he endeavored to convince Miss Fillingham that Higberry had no right to ask her to promise not to forget him.

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It was three months after Higberry left that Stodworthy picked up a Chicago paper and read some headlines that made him start. They announced:

"New Islands Discovered! Oscar B. Higberry Finds Hitherto Unknown Group in the Pacific. He Raises the American Flag and Adds Them to Our Possessions. Natives Accept Jurisdiction of United States Willingly. Great Trade Future. Higberry's Intersting Account of the Ginger Group."

The following two columns of vivid description of how Higberry, while cruising on his pleasure yacht off the coast of New Zealand, whither he had gone to study the system of government, had been blown hundreds of miles out of the track of regular travel, and had come upon a small group of islands, which because of their isolation had never before been visited by white men. Indeed, they were not even noted on any charts. Because the principal product of the islands was, or could be made, ginger, Higberry had conferred upon them the name of "Ginger Group," and had raised a small American flag and had taken possession of them for this government.

There was a fine half tone picture of Higberry, also a three-column pen and ink illustration, showing Higberry nailing the flag to a palm tree before the palace of the king of the islands, with the king and his numerous queens, as weill as his standing army and a group of his subjects, salaaming. There was an interview with Higberry, in which he modestly (for him) gave a brief account of his adventures and a glowing account of the islands. He dwelt especially upon the great possibilities for commercial development of this virgin soil.

"Why," he explained in his interview, "the Gingerrotes,"—this was the name he had given the tribe inhabiting the group—"haven't the slightest idea in the world about money. They don't even have any medium of exchange. Their manner of life is ideal. Each takes what he wants wherever he finds it, and, nobody knowing anything of any other manner of life, nobody makes any objection. Of course, it is our duty to take this benighted people by the hand and lead them into a higher and nobler walk of life. On my own initiative I have taken the first step toward civilizing them by raising above them that grand old banner whose shade gives protection to all beneath it."

There was much more of a patriotic and humanitarian nature in the interview, and once, just once, Higberry had let fall a statement to the effect that this government should lose no time in appointing a capable, earnest man to go to the Ginger Group and take over the reins of government there. This sentance had effect.

Next day there were lengthy editorials commenting upon Higberry's addition to the knowledge of the world and what is on it, and suggesting that he, as the discoverer and adopter of the Ginger Group, should be nominated and confirmed as its Governor-General.

When Oscar B. Higberry reached Green Center, about a week after the announcement of his discovery, the Green Center Band and all the prominent citizens of Green Center, except Granville Stodworthy, met him at the station. He rode to the hotel in a decollette cab and bowed right and left with a modest, deprecatory bow which won the hearts of all. It was noticed that Miss Grace Fillingham, who formed one of a group of girls on the veranda of her father's residence, blushed vividly when Oscar B. Higberry arose in his carriage and made the deepest bow of his triumphal procession toward her. At the hotel there were more speeches of welcome, followed by a luncheon at which there were still more laudatory speeches. Higberry bore his honors easily. Of the Ginger Group he did not talk definitely.

"Terrah-torial acqui-sition," and "inevitable des-tiny" were two phrases that he used often, with resonant effect. Oscar B. Higberry had already gone so far along the path of statecraft that he could hyphenate his long words without stopping to think where the syllables began and ended.

Late in the evening Higberry managed to escape the adulating throng and made his way to the Gazette office. There he found Stodworthy, cold, calm, impassive, and critical. Stodworthy shook him by the hand, inquired how he did, and then asked:

"Have you been away?"

"Been away? Why, man, surely you have read—"

"Of course I have read the papers. But, look here, Higberry, where is this Ginger Group?"

Higberry looked at him for a full minute. Then he extracted a nice, fat cigar from his vest pocket, pinched the end off, lighted the cigar, lifted his feet to the editorial desk and blew a cloud of smoke to the ceiling.

"Where is the Ginger Group?" he echoed. "I cannot give you the precise figures, but I should say, on a rough guess, that the Ginger Group is somewhere in the south Pacific ocean, at about 140 west longitude and 35 south latitude."

"Right down here below Polynesia?" asked Stodworthy, turning to a wall map of the hemispheres.

"Exactly."

"But there is no land indicated on the map at that part of the world."

"You will have to wait until the maps are re-made. Then you'll find the Ginger Group properly shown."

"Higberry, I don't believe there is any Ginger Group."

"Why don't you say so in the paper?"

"Well, because—"

"Because if you do you will be opposing the confident belief of everybody in Green Center and elsewhere, including—don't forget this—including Miss Grace Fillingham."

"That has nothing to do with my opinion. Can't a man come to conclusions of his own?"

"He can, but not where there is a girl concerned. Now, Stod., let's get at the gist of this. You are jealous and envious of me, aren't you? Yes, you are though. You thought you would have the best of it when you accepted my proposition to leave the paper in your hands. Now, I donit care how many debts you have contracted, I stick to my promise to shoulder half of them when the time comes. But, as I own half the paper, you've got to support me. I'm going to be Governor-General of the Ginger Group, but that isn't all. Man, there's nothing that can't be done there—trolley lines, paper mills, railroads, newspapers—don't you see? Those natives—"

"If they exist," interrupted, Stodworthy.,

"—those natives, as I was saying, know absolutely nothing of the world. They're as ignorant of outside affairs as Adam was in the garden of Eden. What we've got to do it to teach them what money is, get them to earn money, and then get the money from them. That's civilization. If you like, you can be Lieutenant-Governor, also vice-president in the different corporations I'm going to organize to develop the Ginger Group. By the way, I'll place an order with you right now for some job printing. We'll want about forty thousand prospectuses and some shares and bonds of The Ginger Group Development Company. I ought to get on the market within a week.

"I don't want any office, either in your government or in your companies."

"All right. There's others. Do you want to do the printing?"

"I can't refuse that, as this is partly your own plant."

"I just wondered."

Higberry took his feet down, drew pen, ink, and paper to him, and prepared the prospectus of the Ginger Group Development Company. Also he drafted the form of the shares of stock and the bonds, which were to be secured by first mortgage on the company's lands, sites, and rights of way in the Ginger Group.

"But look, Higberry," argued Stodworthy, glancing over the copy, "what if you are not made Governor-General?"

"My dear, benighted fellow citizen and brother laborer, if I push things through so that I am at the head of everything else, what good will it do any other man to be Governor-General?"

Higberry sat in the office, after Stodworthy had left, until late in the night, smoking many cigars and studying carefully a map of the south Pacific ocean, which he took from his pocketbook. From time to time he would nod, again he would chuckle; then he would figure hurriedly on some paper on the desk, following this by smiling to himself. At last he put away his map, tore up the sheets of paper on which he had figured, lit a fresh cigar, turned out the lights and left the office, murmuring to himself:

"Governor-General? I guess yes! And then some!"

Returning to the hotel, he sought his room and slept the sleep of the just.

Miss Grace Fillingham said "No" to Granville Stodworthy. She said it kindly, but none the less firmly. She also said it with that shade of weariness which comes into the tones of one who has been compelled to repeat a statement many times.

"This is final?" Stodworthy asked, rising to find his hat, which was in his hand all the time.

"It is, Mr. Stodworthy. I really hate to pain you, but you can see—"

"O, anybody can see," Stodworthy sourly interrupted. "Anybody can see! I suppose if I had gone away and then had come back and claimed to have found the Ginger Group or the Allspice Archipelago or the Citron Community you might have been in a mood to regard me with more favor."

"Why, Mr. Stodworthy! I never supposed you would permit your jealousy to show in such a rude manner."

"How do you thing a man would exhibit his jealousy. Think I would hire a string band and come around here about midnight and sing soft songs about how badly I feel. I tell, you, Grace, you——"

"Miss Fillingham, if you please."

"Miss Fillingham, then. I was going to say, I tell you, is you are permitting yourself to be blinded by the claims of this man Higberry, who is nothing but a mere adventurer—"

"Why, how can you say such things? He is your business partner."

"In the Gazette, yes. Not in the Ginger Group—if there is any iGnger Group."

"But why shouldn't there be a Ginger Group — if theres is any Ginger discovering nesw islands and chemicals and—and things?"

"Oh, yes, but the idea of a lot of islands where ginger can be raised away down there near New Zealand. Why, anybody that knows anything knows that ginger is only produced in the tropics."

"But Mr. Higberry says that the Ginger Group is in a sort of atmospherical and oceanic pocket formed by the southerly trade winds and the warm currents and that really the climate is equable and salubrious the year round, lending to the islands a delightfully—" "My dear Miss Fillingham! I read all that in the proofs of Higberry's prospectus. If you can do no better than to repeat his balderdash to me I shall bid you adieu."

"Indeed, it is not balderdash, Mr. Granville Stodworthy, and I will thank you to be more careful in your comments on my friends."

Stodworthy made what apologies he could and stalked forth idnto the night. His way to the office led him past the hotel. It irked him sore to see iHgberry hobnobbing in the office with the congressman from that district. It was evident that Higberry was after the Governor-Generalship. There was only one phrase of the whole affair that did not displease him. The manifold demands of his enterprise took up so much of Higberry's time that he had few chances to call on Miss Fillingham's. And it seemed that while he was with her he talked nothing but Ginger Group.

There was no questioning the fact that Highberry's reported find had caused a tremendous sensation. Already the matter had worked its way into politics. One party wanted nothing whatever to do with the islands of the Ginger Group. Let the brown man shoulder their own burdens, said this one party. If they wanted to be civilized, now that they were discovered, let them go ahead and civilize themselves, and not tax the United States for the work. On the other hand, the other party was rabidly in favor of taking over the Ginger Group, lock, stock, and barrel, of making the inhabitants civilized citizens by brevet, and of bringing them immediately into the full enjoyment of such blessings as could be sent to them by freight steamers. Anyhow, it was argued, Higberry, by finding the islands, raising the flag and claiming them for this country, had placed us under a moral obligation that could not be shirked, and what must be assumed, whether or not. We should have to handle the matter as best we could and settle the right or wrong of it when we got time. Who, therefore, should be Governor-General? Well, who? All argument simmered down to Oscar B. Higberry. Higberry had organized his Ginger Group Development and the stock was already at par. Subsidiary companies which would take up the various phrases of industrial growth had been formed and their stock also was eagerly purchased.

Higberry really was not pressing the matter of being appointed to the high official position for which he was mentioned. He was busy enough with the purely commercial features of the affair.

From comparative obscurity in Green Centre he had leaped to the greatest prominence and he had to wear a silk hat and frock coat every day. He was besieged for his pictures and for interviews; magazines wanted articles from his pen; autograph seekers made life miserable for him and investors simply gave him no rest. In it all there was one discordant note, and that was the pessimistic voice of Granville Stodworthy. But everybody knew what was wrong with Stodworthy and he lost friends by his course. Stodworthy was always arguing with all who would listen to him. He would pull out the map of the South Pacific Oregon, jab his finger on the spot where Higberry claimed to have bumped into the Ginger group and ask:

"See any indications of land there? It's water—plain old ocean water. You needn't tell me!"

Whereat the others would say:

"Why, that just proves it! Don't you see. Mr. Higberry says the islands are where nobody ever thought there was anything but water. You needn't tell us!"

Higberry one evening found an opportunity to call on Miss Fillingham, and of course the Ginger Group became at once the topic of conversation. Higberry told her for about the hundredth time all about his perilous landing on the shores, of his hospitable reception by the natives, and of how he had stood on the sands and dreamed of empire.

"Miss Fillingham—Grace," he sighed, taking her unresisting hand.

"Mr. Higberry," she whispered.

"Call me Oscar."

"Oh, I couldn't—yet. Think! I should really begin calling you Governor-General."

"And when that comes to pass, there will have to be a Governor-Generaless, Grace."

She blushed and hung her head.

"But," iHgberry went on, tenderly, "I often think how much happier I would be to settle down here in our own country rather than go afar to this unknown territory, and—"

"But you said you have heard the call of duty and that you could not be deaf to it."

"I know I did, but that was in one of those prospectuses. You know, I had to make a lot of people hear that call of duty, too."

"But tell me, Mr. Higberry—well, Oscar, if you really want me to call you so—tell me have you heard anything from the Ginger Group since you left there?"

"Not a word. Of course, you know, there is no mail service or cable line or any way of communicating."

"Then that's why Mr. Stodworthy has—I forgot!"

"You forgot what?" Higberry had dropped her hand and was on the alert.

He told me it was a secret."

"Grace there should be no secrets between us."

"Well, he told me that some of the investors had sent a ship out from New Zealand to survey the Ginger Group."

Higberry went white and red and green. He pulled at his collar as if it were two tight for him.

"When'd he tell you this?"

"Only a week ago."

"The scoundrel!"

"Then it isn't true, is it, Mr. Hig—Oscar—what he says—that there is no Ginger Group at all?"

"True? My dear girl! Don't you suppose that with all these companies organized and all that stock sold—don't you suppose that there simply has got to be a Ginger Group?"

She thought that sounded plausible, and seeing that this line of conversation made Oscar uneasy she changed the subject. But she was unsuccessful in her efforts to keep him off the Ginger Group for more than a few sentences at a time. But before Higberry left that evening he pressed her to name a day for a certain happy event. To this she demurred.

"Wait until you are Governor-General," she said. "It would be such a lovely trip, wouldn't it? And so new! Just think, no bridal couple ever went to that part of the world on their honeymoon, did they?"

He rather ungraciously agreed to the delay; so ungraciously, in fact, that she would not even say, "Yes," she told him that all hinged upon his becoming Governor-General. This brought from him a criticism of her mercenary and material outlook upon the world; and she retaliated by showing him that so far he had been working the material end of the Ginger Group far more than the great and noble projects he had at first outlined. In truth, they had a genuine lovers' quarrel and parted in about as much sorrow as anger.

But in the bosom of Oscar B. Higberry there had been placed one large, lively doubt. And that doubt was of himself.

IS THERE A GINGER GROUP?

In big black type, this line stretched across the first page of the Green Center Gazette.

Stodworthy had declared open war on his partner, and he followed up his ten inch shell of headline with a withering swirl of grapeshot composed of facts, figures, maps, records, and statistics. Nemesis had gone on the warpath.

But, to everybody except Granville Stodworthy and Oscar B. Higberry, the question might as well have been: "Is there a North America?" The Ginger Group had been accepted as an entity. People had put their money in it, and it had been thrown into politics. When anything gets into political discussions it must exist. However, Stodworthy succeeded in arousing some excitement—particularly in the mind of Higberry. He came post haste to the Gazette office, a copy of the offending paper clutched in his hand, and opened the vials of his wrath upon the head of Stodworthy. The latter stood by his guns.

"It's as much my paper as it is yours, and besides, you have put it in my charge for the present. I can only print what appeals to me as being plausible and true."

"I'll get an injunction," asserted Higberry.

"Do. That'll be an acknowledgment that I'm in the right. Look here, Higberry, if there really is a Ginger Group, why don't you prove it?"

"Prove it? Prove it? Why, you chucklehead, do you think I can load those islands in a boat and bring them here, and carry them around for inspection?"

"No. But all you have done is get after the money. You haven't suggested a surveying expedition or—"

Higberry snorted.

"No. But you have, haven't you? You're the man that caused an expedition to be sent from New Zealand, to try to make me out a liar, aren't you? Nice sort of a business associate you are!"

"I'd like to know how you found that out."

"O, these things are hard to keep quiet."

It really was unkind of Stodworthy to break into print with his suspicions just at this time. Higberry had succeeded in being interviewed and in writing articles and otherwise working the public up to a high pitch of enthusiasm over himself and the Ginger Group. Congressman Whiffles was heart and soul in favor of having Higberry made Governor-General with a salary commensurate to his position and a good, healthy appropriation for public expenses. The shares and bonds of the different companies were only beginning to move up in value. Higberry had disposed of a great many of them, but it cost money to keep the public interest at the top pitch. And now came Stodworthy with his dampening: "Is There a Ginger Group?"

Now, where there is a woman in the case—and there are very few cases which lack women—the man is prone to think that she is the salient feature. So with the Ginger Group dispute. Higberry almost forgot the group, the stocks, the bonds, the offices, and all else. After all, his first object to be achieved was the hand of Miss Fillingham. For that he had found the Ginger Group, for that he had aspired to high position and honor, for that he had dreamed of wealth and worked for it, too. But the Fillingham family took the Gazette, and Grace could read the headlines as well as anybody else could.

It is a peculiar fact that those whose good opinion we want are those who insist most upon our deserving it. They are the first to hearken to the still small voice of detraction. They are the first who want us to explain. Those who care nothing for us never ask us to explain; they simply cay we cannot explain, and go ahead believing the bad about us as hard as they can. Had Higberry been less demonstrative in his efforts to win Miss Fillingham; had he refrained from hanging his banners on the outer walls and notifying Stodworthy that there was to be a fight, then he might have conducted his Ginger Group campaign without so much interference.

Let us see his position at this stage of the proceedings: A ship was somewhere on the briny deep, seeking the Ginger Group, Stodworthy was opposing him by bald statement and by innuendo. The congressman was hedging. The investors were growing few. And Miss Fillingham, with that sweet ingenuousness of women, was asking him why, if what people were saying was not true, he did not at once disprove it. In vain did Higberry cite the fact that he was calling folks liars as rapidly as possible. She refused to give him the affirmative answer to the question he had put so often. There was one little balm of Gilead for him; she simply had no use for that mean Mr. Stodworthy!

The weeks went by and Higberry waxed nervous. Stodworthy did, also. The ship that had gone on the voyage of investigation had not yet reported. It was overdue.

"It has found the Ginger Group, and the captain and crew are being detained," declared Higberry."

"It is still searching for the Ginger Group," retorted Stodworthy.

The public escillated between the two opinions. Other papers began referring to Higberry's "alleged claims." Circumstances were growing parlous. At last the tension snapped. One day there came two cablegrams. The first read:

The ship Hawkeye has returned from an unsuccessful cruise in search of the Ginger Group.

Stodworthy had the grace to show this cablegram to Higberry before printing it. We may never know whether it was a feeling of guilt or of pique that impelled Oscar B. Higberry to pack his grip, to withdraw his bank balance, and to fade from the scene with unbecoming suddenness. If it were not for the second cablegram, which came that same afternoon, we should have our doubts about Higberry. The second message was:

The Southern Pacific Ocean has been the scene of terrific volcanic and seismic disturbances within the past fortnight. Many small islands have been submerged and new ones have arisen. The survey ship Hawkeye reports that latitude south 35, longitude west 140, is a calm expanse of water. This was the reported location of the Ginger Group of islands.

Since then there have been two investigating committees and one surveying committee sent to the south seas. Congressman Whiffles was a member of the second investigating committee, which gathered evidence which should justify the government in withdrawing the appropriation it had made for the installation of civil administration in the Ginger Group.

As an instance of the back-handed slaps sometimes administered by Nemesis, we must add that Granville Stodworthy, editor of the Green Centre Gazette, in the course of his duty had to write the following item:

Married.—At the home of the bride's parents, Miss Grace Euphemia Fillingham to the Hon. Robert Miggle Whiffles. The happy couple sailed Tuesday with the congressional committee which goes to the south seas to inspect the late site of the islands known as the Ginger Group.

Vague rumors of a white man who is head of a republic in the wilds of Thibet, and who is obstinate in his refusal to permit explorers to enter his country, have recalled the events narrated above. It is just possible that the ambition of Oscar B, Higberry is vaulting again and that he is taking precautions to avoid running against anything.

THE FULLERTON SALVAGE CASE, - - By George Carling

The Fullerton Salvage Case NO. 1

Denham, the superintendent of the Nisqually Light and Power Company, was lounging on the veranda of his log hungalow, feeling well content with the outcome of a good week's work. The evening was warm, and he watched the quivering shadows of the great redwoods, lying out over the little lake, with lazy, unthinking eyes; or, if he was thinking at all, it was of the dreamy rest and enjoyment of the next thirty-six hours.

There was a slight rustling among the pine needles, and he turned his head. Approaching him, with slow and not very confident footsteps, was a man—one of the derelicts of civilization. His face, evidently young, had the stubby growth of a ten days' beard; his eyes had a hungry, yet hopeful look; his clothes were faded and tattered.

"Well?" said Denham questioningly.

"I understand you want men, Mr. Denham," replied the man.

The superintendent started at the voice. It was of a quality entirely out of accord with the dilapidated appearance of the owner. He looked again, keenly this time, and then pulled his own hat down over his eyes.

"What can you do?" he demanded.

"String up wires, look after conductors, assemble a dynamo, or rewind an armature," replied the man simply.

"Well," said Denham, after a pause, "you'll have to confess, my friend, that your appearance doesn't back up your statements. What's wrong with you?"

"Klondike and whiskey! Too much money one time, too little another!" Then, after a pause during which he fumbled with his buttons, he added bitterly: "This is my first appearance in this role. I haven't graduated to this without some pretty strenuous endeavors. Normally, I'm only an electrical engineer, you know."

From under the brim of his hat, Denham noted the weary, despairing look of the man.

"Got any more to tell?" he asked abruptly.

"Not about myself—you would not care to hear it. It's just the old, miserable story—homesickness, the excitement of success, then taking things as they come; going with the current, mentally and morally. Still," he added slowly, "I think, if I got to handling the 'juice' again, I'd be all right. I don't want to make promises, but—give me a chance, won't you?"

"Yes," said Denham, after looking across the lake a few moments. "You can report at the power-house on Monday morning. And—see here—what's the name?"

"The name? Oh, yes—er—Jones."

"Jones, eh?" repeated Denham. "Well, Mr.—er—Jones, can you swim?"

"Certainly." There was a distinct note of surprise in the answer.

"Wait here a minute."

In a few moments Denham returned with some clothes and linen on his arm. "This is an old suit," he said, "but I like my line-men to uphold the credit of the company. You'll find bathing-trunks down there in the bathhouse; also a razor. Go down and straighten yourself out."

With a grateful look, Jones went. In an hour he returned. In his hand he held a two-dollar bill. "You ought to search the pockets of your old clothes," he said, with a smile.

"I put that in them just now," retorted Denham. "It goes with the clothes."

Without a word the man crumpled the bill in his hand and walked away.

It was six weeks before Denham saw him again. Jones had been placed under the power-house engineer, and by him put to work on the transmission line. This kept him in the woods, replacing guy-lines and anchors, climbing poles, and inspecting conductors. He was out of Denham's sight altogether, but not out of his mind. The superintendent made inquiries and found that Jones was doing well.

"He seems to be well satisfied with the forest work, and he's doin' first-rate," said McDougall, the engineer. "It's a lucky thing, too. It's blamed few men who take kindly to that lonesome sort of job."

When Denham saw him he was at the top of a twenty-foot pole. The superintendent waited till he descended, and then held out his hand.

"Well, Bob Fullerton, how do you like it?"

The man started with surprise. "So you know me, then?"

"I knew you the first day, Bob; but as you wished to keep it to yourself, I thought I wouldn't break in. Great Scott, man! you don't suppose I'd forget my old college chum, do you?"

"I didn't know, Denham. Guess I was pretty well disguised."

"That's all over now, old man."

"I hope so," said Fullerton wistfully. "This life is good for me. I'm all right when I'm on the old work."

"It isn't much of a job for you," said Denham. "but there are chances. There's one now. We've got to put a new night engineer on. Shipley's going to Seattle. You can have the job if you want it. It means better pay, of course, and a chance to show what's in you."

"Of course I'll take it, Denham, and I'll hold it down, too, I guess."

"Come up to the bungalow on Saturday, and stay over till Monday morning," said the superintendent. "Gee! How hungry I've been for a long talk with you over old times! But I kept away from you, Bob. I wanted you to fight this out alone."

Fullerton had been running the dynamos for about a week when one of the wind storms which were not uncommon in that mountainous country occurred. It reached its height about two o'clock in the morning, and the engineer paced up and down the power-house floor, his ears intently listening for fuses blowing out. Occasionally he stepped to the door and listened to the roar of the wind and the terrific slapping and crashing of the great trees. Even the heavy stone buildings would sometimes show a sulky tremor as some furious gust caught it. But Fullerton's anxiety was not for the house; it was for the line. That little copper wire carrying sixty thousand volts ran for six miles through that dense forest to Brookville, and in the fury of that gale and the wreck and crash of heavy trees, Fullerton felt but little hope that the wire would escape destruction.

Suddenly he heard a crash just outside the house, and a glance from the window showed a stream of wicked blue sparks flying from the roof of the small woden toll-house. The first line-pole had come down, bringing the wire across the roof of that shed. Instantly he sprang to the switch and pulled it out. Then he ran to the water-gate and shut off the power. It was a long screw, and it took him over a minute to close the gate, and by that time the roof of the shed, which was as dry as tinder, was in flames. Then, with a horror that whitened his face, he remembered that there were four kegs of giant-powder in that shed—enough to blow the entire plant out of the township.

With a gasp of despair he seized the key and rushed to the shed—fumbling badly at the great padlock—while the flames were even then licking over the eaves. Wrenching the door open, he sprang in, seized a keg, carried it out, and flung it some distance away. A second and a third time he repeated this, dodging in beneath a seething mass of flames from which sparks and burning chips were already falling. As he reached the door for the fourth time, a couple of short, light rafters fell in, accompanied by a mass of smaller stuff, showering down directly upon the remaining keg. With a howl of dismay he sprang back and dashed away, but before he had gone a dozen yards the explosion came, and he was crashed to the ground.

It was two hours before Denham and some assistants arrived. They had been warned by the extinguishing of the lights of Brookville that there was trouble along the line, or at the power-house. Two miles up the road their team was blocked by falling timber. The rest of the journey was made on foot and was full of danger and difficulty.

They found the power-house intact—except for broken windows—but outside was the unconscious Fullerton, pinned down by a heavy joist, one leg doubled up beneath him and two ribs broken.

On the fourth day afterward, when Denham made his usual visit to Fullerton's bedside, he saw instantly that something had gone wrong. There was a raging pulse and a flushed face.

"Feeling worse, Bob" he asked anxiously.

"Pull up a chair, Dick. I've something to tell you," said Fullerton excitedly. Then he seemed to be at a loss just how to begin. Finally he said, with a moan:

"I left a girl over there"—rolling his eyes towards the East. "She's been waiting for me all this time. That alone ought to have kept me straight. We were to have married before this—at least, that is what I thought. I came out here to make my pile, and I've——"

"See here, old man," interrupted Denham, "you don't want to worry about those things now. You're getting along all right, you know."

"I've got to worry about it, Dick! There's more to it. I want you to help me—and this thing won't wait. I did pretty well the first year, and then—well, the climate's hard, you know, Dick, and I went to pieces. I never did any good, after that. But I wrote her that I was making money. Sometimes told her that I was too busy to write lengthy particulars. And all the time I was going down hill I kept on telling her fairy stories.

"It's a great country, this West!" he continued with a groan. "Full of great dreams, great hopes, great wrecks. My last letter was just before I got this job. I was on my uppers, you know, and yet I wrote her that I was doing tremendously, and hoped, in a few months, to be able to snatch time to go East and fetch her.

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