

A. Doughty, "Silent Pardner."

By Holman F. Day.

CAPTAIN DUNCAN BODGE, of the schooner *T. P. Todd*, felt a flush spread hotly under his grizzled beard and a contrasting trickle of cold along his spine. He blinked away a haze that had suddenly obscured his vision as he gazed on Farmer Aminadab Doughty. The farmer, relighted his pipe, set his chair legs more firmly into the spongy sod and leaned back against the weather-stained clapboards of his domicile. He had spoken last. Now he smoked and gazed serenely out across the sun-freckled cove, toward a squat

away from the house, still dizzy from his prolonged, adoring, blinking study of the face of Farmer Doughty's daughter.

But this proposition that had at last oozed like poison drops out of the old man!

Captain Bodge picked up his glazed cap from underneath his chair, moved his lips once or twice, as though to speak, and then began to lumber slowly away over the dooryard sward.

"Why, Captain Duncan, you aren't going yet, are you?" called a woman's cheery voice. She stood at the open kitchen window, plump, rosy and thirty—the spinster daughter of Widower Doughty. "You promised to let father entertain you till I had done my dishes," she went on. "Now, you just set yourself and do as you agreed." Her playful tone of authority brought the crinkle of a bashful grin upon his weather-beaten face, and he went back to his chair. When the distant clatter of crockery announced her departure from the window, Farmer Doughty observed, dryly:

"I reckon that talkin' bus'ness must make you absent-minded, cap!"

The skipper of the *T. P. Todd* lowered his voice to a growl.

"Dab Doughty, I just heard handcuffs snappin' and a jedge sayin' 'Guilty,' and the bang of a cell door, when ye was talkin'." The skipper's voice trembled.

"Mnh-huh! Ye're afraid, hey?"

"I ain't afraid, afo't or ashore, of anything I can meet like a man, but when ye hem and haw and put a prison job up to Dunk Bodge, he dodges. And that's me to the ke'ison!"

"S that so, eh? Well, if ye ain't got no more bus'ness sprawl to ye than that ye'd better not wait till them dishes is washed. Neither me nor the gal's got any use for ye," said the old man, with decision.

"That's a nice thing to say about a inmercent daughter," retorted the skipper.

"Look here, Dunk," snapped the farmer, "here you be, middle-aged. Ye've coasted and tug-a-lugged till ye're warped like a dock spile, and all ye've got to show for it is a fore-and-aft schooner that is so rotten that ye don't dast to sneeze aboard her, for fear she'll cave in. And a'l this while others that I can speak of has been gittin' ahead of ye. It's about time ye was appreciatin' common sense and a bus'ness manager. I'm ready to pump common sense into ye and be the manager, and now ye go to gawpin' like a lighthouse in a fog and makin' remarks that, if so be ye wasn't in a way to be my son-in-law, I'd boot ye down hill for. On t'other hand—" Doughty took out his



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bowed two-master that was anchored in the reach.

Captain Duncan Bodge remembered now more clearly strange stories of woodpiles hollowed from underneath until only the shell had remained. 'Min'dab Doughty suspected! Potato fields, the hills of which had been ravaged, the soil replaced and the top left standing. 'Min'dab Doughty suspected! But never caught!

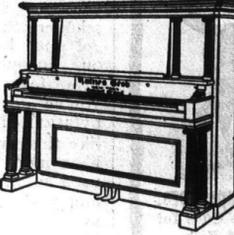
Captain Bodge had heretofore resolutely determined, on many occasions, not to believe all that people said about the transactions of Farmer Doughty. This was always after he had stumbled



"Love is some better'n beet greens, hey, Dunk?" Quizzed Aminadab."

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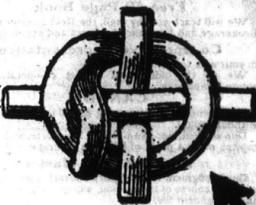
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