

The Hue Of Resolution.

If John Abbott had a besetting fault it was his lack of determination. He was so slow in making up his mind regarding every subject that really it could scarcely be said that he made it up at all. Circumstances usually did it for him.

If he had a question to decide, a difficulty to meet, or an obstacle to overcome, he would wait around, doubting and hesitating until something occurred to close every avenue of escape from his difficulty but one, and then John would be obliged to take that road, whether it was the best that had been presented to his mental vision or not. This lack of resolution made of John rather a vacillating, invertebrate creature, a source of trial to his friends, and an annoyance to himself, for he was continually blocking his own pathway to success. Aunt Sally Hopkins said (and with some truth), that if

was always in the banking-rooms on time in the morning. As soon as the clock on the church spire above the way pointed to five minutes of nine, John was sure to be just about turning the corner, or entering the side-door of the office. He was never late, though it was a good two miles' walk from his home on the outskirts of the town.

For some months he had been carefully hoarding his money, and one morning rode into the bank on the wheel he had purchased the day before from Sessions, the local bicycle agent. He was so delighted with his new possession that he could not help glancing at it every time he had occasion to go into the back office.

Before the morning was half over John saw Mr. Sessions come in. He was busy at the moment, and Mr. Gallup attended to him. The bicycle dealer had a deposit to make and while the banker verified the several items

'Last night.'

'Got it from Abbott—from John Abbott?' He spoke so strangely that Mr. Sessions was perplexed. 'What's the matter with you, Gallup?' he asked. 'Is there anything wrong with the bill?'

'Wait a moment,' said the banker, hastily. 'You are a cautious man, Sessions. I marked that note myself for a special purpose. See that red cross in the corner? Abbott, come here a moment.'

John came unsuspectingly. Mr. Gallup placed the bank-note before him. 'Mr. Sessions says you paid him this note,' said the banker.

John looked surprised, 'I can't swear to having paid him that particular note, sir,' he said. 'But I gave him a note for a like amount last night.'

'Where did you get it?' demanded Mr. Gallup, his tone a bit harsher.

'I—I—why, sir, I have been saving the money out of my salary all winter,' said John, in astonishment.

'No, no!' exclaimed the banker. 'Where did you get that identical note?'

'Oh! I took it from the safe, sir. I did not know it would displease you. There were several loose one hundred dollar bills there and my money was in notes of small denominations and in silver. I distributed it around in the various compartments for small notes and coin. I have often changed notes in that way before.'

'Ah!' exclaimed Mr. Gallup, and his face brightened visibly. 'Just step to the safe and bring me that package of loose notes—the one from which you took this.'

John obeyed. Mr. Gallup took them in his hands and looked at them sternly before counting them. 'There were seventeen hundred dollars in this pile yesterday morning. According to your reckoning there should be sixteen hundred now?'

'Why, yes, sir.'

Mr. Gallup ran the bills over hastily. Then he went over them carefully, with compressed lips and a portentous frown upon his brow. There were but fifteen!

'One hundred from seventeen does not leave fifteen, Abbott,' said the banker, while Sessions looked on in amazement. 'That bill lay on top of this pile yesterday morning. Do you see that red cross? I marked it myself, so I know it came from the pile. Where has the other hundred dollar note gone?'

John was very white about the mouth, but he held his head up, and looked at his employer unflinchingly. 'Why do you ask me that, sir?' he demanded.

'Hold on, Johnny,' interrupted Sessions. 'Let's all keep cool. This is a serious business.'

'And it shall be investigated thoroughly,' said the banker, quickly. 'You may return to your work, Abbott.' Another customer had just entered. 'Keep this business to yourself, please, Sessions,' whispered Mr. Gallup.

'Of course. But I'll risk my own reputation on Johnny Abbot's honesty. Why, I've known him since he was a boy in kilts.'

'I do not accuse him,' declared the banker. 'But a hundred dollar note has been lost, and that particular one surely came from the package.'

Sessions examined the private mark again curiously. 'It's rather faint,' he said, 'but it's red ink all right. Doesn't anybody besides you and John have the run of the office?'

'Not when the safe is open. The janitor is never here until we get through for the



WHERE DID YOU GET THIS?

John had a hill to climb, he'd wait round and procrastinate, to see if the hill wouldn't be levelled by the time he had to climb it.

But John had gone through school with some degree of success, and graduated well up in his class. He was particularly strong in arithmetic, and had a clear head for business—when once he applied himself to the question in hand. So he accepted a position with Mr. Gallup, the banker. If two situations had been open to him he might have been trying to decide yet; but, as it was, he walked out of school one day, and took up his work behind the wire screen in the bank-house the next.

And now he had a condition to face that could not be set aside or ignored for a moment. He had been with Mr. Gallup nearly a year, and had made himself of considerable value to the old banker. There was one thing about John—he was faithful. He

on the deposit slip, Mr. Sessions walked along to John.

'How does she run, Johnny?' he asked.

'Finely,' declared John, with enthusiasm. Just then Mr. Gallup uttered a sharp exclamation. 'See here, Mr. Sessions,' he said.

The bicycle man went back to his part of the counter. The old banker held a bank-note out towards him. 'Where did you get that?' he asked, and his voice trembled slightly.

'Eh? Isn't it good?' demanded Sessions.

'Yes, yes. It's all right. But I want to know where you got it?'

'I thought it was all right, Gallup,' said the other, with a laugh, 'I got it from your clerk.'

'From Abbott?'

'Yes.'

'When?'