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The Rehabilitation of David

AS the hands of the office clock marked ten, a roar from the Stock Exchange across the street rose upon the air, lulled, and swelled again. However the volume of sound might vary, there remained always a steady undercurrent of tone, not unlike the shoreward surge of surf.

The "ghosts" in Buncombe's gathered round the ticker, one calling the prices as they printed. Buncombe's was, in its way, unique among the brokerage firms of Wall Street, a backwater whither the wrecks of that financial sea drifted to find a haven. So far as Trenham knew, not one of them had a pecuniary interest in the market, yet punctually each morning they appeared, no one could say whence. After sitting the day through in Buncombe's easy chairs, reading his news slips and crowding his ticker, they disappeared, whither none could tell.

Several of them bore the earmarks of breeding; one or two, despite shabby clothes, still looked the gentleman. Their talk was largely reminiscent, and stories or anecdotes were invariably prefaced by "when I was a member of the New York Stock Exchange, sir."

At ten thirty a timid little man crept in and joined the group around the machine.

Trenham. "See, a call on one thousand shares at a hundred and twenty. Anything above that will be profit! But it's good only today."

Trenham would have liked to ask how his companion came by an option that might, ere the day closed, become valuable; but no information was volunteered.

There was a constant bustling in the office, every one excited, all talking at once. Buncombe raced in for a moment, hair tumbled, voice hoarse from shouting, and raced out again.

"Ah, it's the deuce of a day," he croaked as the swinging door banged behind him.

Messengers clattered in and out, telephone bells rang, tickers thumped. Above all was the infernal babel from the Exchange. Prices were rising. Sugar alone held back. The little man writhed in his chair, ears astrain to catch quotations. Luncheon time came, and the office thinned. He made no move. He had explained so often that he thought luncheon unwholesome, that two meals a day were enough for any man. Yet he accepted Trenham's invitation with alacrity, and, once at table, ate with the relish of a hungry man, though casting side glances at the ticker. He was palp-



Helen Walcott, daughter of Dr. Chas. D. Walcott, Secy, Smithsonian Institution. Miss Walcott is a noted Alpine climber and proposes scaling Robson Peak this summer. Miss Walcott is now in the Robson district with her father who is engaged in an extensive geological research.

"Good morning," said he, generally.

"How's Sugar?"

"Not out yet."

"London up?"

"Two points."

The late comer chose a chair next Trenham's, and drew in behind a commercial newspaper. As a rule, Trenham had observed, he sat silent, eye upon tape or newspaper, jaws working automatically upon borrowed tobacco, in time to lifting brows. Presently the little man peeped forth, very much as a mouse from out a hole.

"I look for a bull market today."

"Can't see it, after Saturday's bank statement, even though London was higher," replied Trenham.

"I am sorry," said the other mildly. "I hoped it might rise."

For days the market had been feverish. Anything might be expected of it, and in whatever direction it went the movement was likely to be decided. The roar from the Exchange grew momentarily louder; the ticker clicked and thumped, and prices grew more buoyant. The little man again sat down beside Trenham. Jaws and eyebrows worked at racing speed as the upward tendency of the market increased the excitement. More than ever did he remind one of a mouse, so deprecating and unobtrusive he was in his pathetic little way.

"Sugar nineteen and a half," called some one at the ticker. It was an advance of one point over the opening.

The little man twitched nervously. "Twenty is my price," he whispered to

ably anxious at the sluggishness of Sugar.

"Don't think about the market," Trenham said to him, and made him drink part of a bottle of sherry. The wine steadied him.

"I must apologize, sir, for my nervousness," he said. "When I was a member of the New York Stock Exchange, I could stand to win or lose without a tremor. For more than a year I have waited for this opportunity, watching and studying the movements of Sugar, scrimping, saving, and denying, in order to be ready to take advantage of any chance that might present itself. And, sir, just when I judged the time ripe, I was enabled to secure this call. It seems the hand of fate."

"I hope you'll win something handsome," said Trenham sympathetically.

"I am not without hopes. It is my daughter for whom I am anxious." He opened his watch and passed it to Trenham. "Her picture, sir. She is not strong; the physicians fear for her lungs, and recommend a higher altitude. She is a fine girl, sir, a fine girl; beautiful character. It has long been my wish to take her from the city. We both have a fondness for farming, and often spend entire evenings over the seed catalogues. I know a place that would suit us exactly, in the locality prescribed by the doctors. It is expensive. When I tell you the price is ten thousand dollars, you will be able to appreciate my anxiety for a substantial rise in Sugar. Shall we return to our office, sir?"

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