Taken at His Word

Geoffrey Hall, secretary to the firm of Onions, Ltd., turned in his swivel chair and gave the handle of the telephone beside him a sharp twist.

"Nods but the brave deserve the fair," he quoted, softly. "By George, I'll do it! Halloa! That Exchange? 04962. Tha-anks. Who're you? Right. Mr. Rinowe in? Switch me through to him please."

"Faint heart never won fair lady," he hummed to himself as he waited the answering call. A sharp click struck on his ear as the clerk jerked the pointer "through" to the private office, and on the instant a gruff voice, which he knew well, came boldly over the wire: "Got the sack from Onions', eh? How's that?"

Now, by all the ethics, when Geoffrey discovered that through the inadvertence of the speculator, in leaving the receiver off its standard, he had been made privy to a private conversation, he should have immediately signified the fact by ringing through. Ordinarily he would not have hesitated a moment to have done so, for, though he was keen enough to advance himself by legitimate means, he was no eavesdropper, but the name of Onions tempted him to listen a moment longer, and the instant he caught the fainter tones of the other man—fainter because he was not so close to the instrument—the receiver became glued to his ear.

"That's Beetlestone, the man who received notice yesterday. Now, what's his game, I wonder? I think as a servant of the firm this is my business, father-in-law prospective."

For five minutes he sat rigid and silent. Then the voices suddenly ceased, and he gave a prolonged whistle. "Replaced the receiver," he murmured. "By George, what luck! I'll stop that little game anyhow." He turned again and gave the handle a sharp jerk.

"Halloa!" came the greeting over the wire.

"Is that you, sir?" he said. "Yes, Geoffrey. Can you give me five minutes after dinner this evening? Important? Yes. Nine prompt? Thank you, I'll be there."

"I wonder how he'll take it," he mused, as he shut down his roll-top desk. "Clever little woman, Flo, to suggest I should tackle him after dinner. She'll be a wife to be proud of."

Punctually on the stroke he presented himself at the Rinowe mansion. As the butler disappeared with his card, a winsome girl tripped down the stairs and ran eagerly towards him. Taking her outstretched hands, he bent towards the upturned glowing face and whispered:—

"I've come to beard the lion in his den, little girl."

"Brave boy," she laughed; "I hope you will come forth unscathed."

The butler reappeared. "Will you please step into the library, sir?" he said. "Mr. Rinowe will be with you immediately."

"Good!" said the young man. He regarded him for a moment with a twinkle in his eye. "I know you're discreet, Jukes," he observed, "but would you avert your smiling face for one short second? Tha-anks!" He bent quickly to the expectant lips. "Ahem; you may look, Jukes" he said. "Darling, I trust to see you after the skirmish."

"The guv'nor's in an uncommonly good humor tonight, sir," volunteered Jukes, as he switched on the electric light. He stayed at the door and regarded the young man with a friendly smile.

"Wish you luck, sir," he remarked, and promptly disappeared.

"Um," said Geoffrey, dropping on to the lounge. "I am suspected, evidently. Decent sort of chap, though." The door opened and Jabez Rinowe, the wealthy speculator, strode in.

"How are you, my boy?" he greeted the young man, warmly.

Geoffrey returned his greeting and took the proffered weed.

Planting himself on the rug with his back to the fireplace, Jabez shot a searching glance. "Well, my, what can I do for you?" he said.

Geoffrey set his cigar well going and came to the point at once. In a plain, straightforward manner he stated his request for consent to pay his addresses to the speculator's daughter.

Jabez listened with an enigmatic smile on his shrewd face that set a hundred little lines round his half-closed eyes. That disconcerting smile was still apparent some moments after Geoffrey had finished. The young man flicked the ash from his cigar and looked up at him inquiringly.

"Deeply sensible of the honor," delivered Jabez, at length. "I like you. You've got nerve. Just one question before I give my reply. You know the style my daughter is accustomed to. Can you maintain her in it?" He swept his arm ostentatiously around the sumptuously furnished room, to give point to his query.

"No," answered Geoffrey, unabashed. "She won't expect to begin where her father can comfortably leave off. But I think she's as willing to wait as I am to work."

"Um, I see," returned Jabez, with a snap of his fingers. "Love in a cottage. Well, I'm sorry I can't consent. I've determined the fellow my girl's going to marry has got to be a money-spinner. Now, you—"

"Exactly," cut in the young man, imperturbably. "You'll forgive me if I suggest that you yourself didn't wait to become a capitalist before you married?"

Jabez grinned at the thrust.

"P'r'aps not, my lad," he said, affably, "but I guess I was well on the track. 'Pears to me you haven't yet struck it."

"I fancy there's more than one road to fortune," retorted Geoffrey. "I'm rather anxious to keep to the straight one."

"Very laudable," said Jabez, with a short laugh, "but if the millionaires of today travelled by the high road there'd be precious few of 'em. The temptations to leave the crowd by short cuts are might powerful. However, we're quibbling. As I said, I like you; I think you've got grit. When you can show me you've started out, we'll talk again. How're Onions? I hear you're booming."

"You may say it," returned Geoffrey, eyeing him closely. "Machines running day and night. Just secured Government contract. Keep us going for a tidy spell. If you've got a few thousands idle, they're worth buying. Safe for a rise after the report. I'm going a hundred or so myself."

"Thanks," said Jabez. "What are they now?"

"Fifteen on this morning's market."

"I suppose this government stuff has to be delivered on specific dates?"

"Yes; the usual conditions," returned Geoffrey. "We have to keep a keen supervision over the machines just now. You see, the raw stuff passes through half-a-dozen in sequence before it's thrown out the finished article. Wonderfully clever—smothered in patents every one of 'em."

Jabez turned and broke a coal on the fire with his heel.

"Um! I would be awkward if you had a breakdown with any one, wouldn't it?" he said, with assumed indifference.

Geoffrey smiled. "Pumping," he thought; "he's going on that Beetlestone's tip for certain."

"By George, yes!" he said. "Throw all the others to a standstill. Penalties and all the rest of it for every day over time. But it isn't likely."

"No; I suppose not," said Jabez. "Workmen all satisfied?"

"Oh, yes. There was a try-on by the feeder of No. 2—a Socialist fellow named Beetlestone—a day or so ago, to force a general advance on the strength of this job, but we promptly led him to understand we could do without him. He leaves this week-end."

"Good!" exclaimed the speculator. "That sort of thing must be nipped in the bud."

The young man rose to his feet and put out his hand.

"I'm to understand then, sir," he said smilingly, "that when I can show you that I have struck the track for fortune you will consent?"

"That's a promise!" said Jabez. "Good night, and thanks for the tip. I think I shall buy Onions."

"Smart chap," he soliquized, when the door had closed behind him. "Wants me to buy! Crumbs! I'd bet he'd change his song if he knew what I've learned this day. That chap Beetlestone means mischief before he leaves. Swore he'd get his own back' if they jugged him for it. That's good enough, I reckon. It's safe for a couple of thousand at least. I'll see Denniss first thing in the morning."

"Sly old fox," mused Geoffrey, as, after a brief word with the girl, he took his leave. "It's a thousand pounds to a little apple he'll go on that fellow Beetlestone's tip for something substantial."

He stopped dead at the thought, and an involuntary laugh burst from his lips. "By Jove!" he cried, "I'll take him at his word. What a chance!"

Hailing a passing cab, he gave the driver the address of his club and was whirled away. Ten minutes later has was shaking hands with his friend Morton, the stockbroker.

"Thought I should find you here, Charlie," he said, excitedly. "Come into the smoke-room. I want to talk."

"Well, old chap," said Morton, when they were settled in a quiet corner.

"What were Onions today at closing?" asked Geoffrey.

"Fifteen and a sixth," Morton replied, readily. "Jumped up a sixth on the strength of the expected favorable report. Why? Are you buying?"

"Look, here, Charlie," said Geoffrey, confidentially, "I've reason to think there'll be a rig on tomorrow's market. Somebody's going to play the bear with Onions. It's probable they'll come down a trifle below the fifteen if my information's correct. Now I want you to buy everything offered below the level money on my account."

"That's a big order!" observed Morton, elevating his eyebrows. "What's it mean?"

"It's a plunge, Charlie, in which I risk a goad deal more than appears on the face. I can't give you any particulars. May I rely on you?"

"Certainly, old man," returned the broker. "But you won't blame me if you're bitten?"

Geoffrey smiled.

"Nothing's absolutely certain, is it?" he remarked, senteniously, as he rose to his feet. "Shall we play a hundred up?"

* * *

On the following afternoon Geoffrey was engaged at his desk when Samuel Onions, the managing director of the concern, stamped into his room.

"Hall," he burst out, excitedly, "there's some infernal jugglery on at the house. What do you think? Hargreaves has just 'phoned me we've been down to 14¾. First thing this morning Denniss shot a pile on the market. Not selling 'em quick enough, he dropped 'em to the level money. Some tomfool report got circulated, and before noon they were down at what I tell you. At that figure somebody was cute enough to snap all offered. Denniss stopped when he'd dropped enough, and now they're wobbling between 14¾ and the level money. What I should like to know is, who the dickens is behind Denniss, and what does it mean?"

Geoffrey regarded him calmly.

"Looks as if somebody knows, or thinks he knows, something you and I don't," he said, presently.

"How? Everything's going right, isn't it?" queried the chief.

"Perfectly," returned the secretary. "I read it that somebody's going on an expected casualty—say, a little accident—to one of our machines, which, as you know, at the present juncture would be mighty serious for us. It looks as if he's plunging on the certainty of such an accident very shortly happening."

Samuel Onions stayed in his walk and gazed at him wide-eyed and speechless with indignation.

"I surmise somebody knows how we're fixed for deliveries over this government job—how we're working all the hours of the twenty-four to keep level with the demand — and knowing that a breakdown would carry us down on the market in selling for the fall."

"By jove, Hall, if you're right we have got to watch out!" spluttered Mr. Onions.

"Precisely," returned Geoffrey, quietly. "Up to this minute everything is working beautifully. In half an hour the night shift begins. Now, you'll remember Beetlestone, the feeder of No. 2, is under notice to leave tomorrow. I suggest to you that it would be as well, to avoid unpleasant contingencies, that he is paid off when he presents himself tonight. I make no charge, but I think it would be as well if he did not go down."

"You're right," cried the managing director. "But the machine—it must be kept running!"

"There's no difficulty about that," said Geoffrey. "I'll supervise the running of No. 2 muself tonight. Tomorrow we can arrange with another mechanic. We can't afford to take any risks."

"I guess our friend Beetlestone will be considerably astonished," he said, as he donned his overalls. "This overtime's going to be the best paid job I've ever undertaken, or I'm a Dutchman!"

He went down to the timekeeper's office with a smile on his face. Two minutes later Beetlestone swaggered through the door. Tendering him his week's wage, Geoffrey informed him that he could have the rest of his unworked notice for a gift. Utterly taken aback the man from abuse came to threats, whereupon he was promptly put into the street. Giving strict injunctions that on no account was he to be admitted, Geoffrey went to his self imposed task.

The morning's post brought the intimation that Morton had bought 1,600 Onion on his account at 14¾.

A fortnight later, when the report had been presented to the public, the shares went up to 15¼.

Thus it came about that settlement day left Jabez Rinowe the poorer by exactly one thousand pounds.

That evening Geoffrey went round to see the speculator. He found him, as he anticipated, in far from a genial mood.

"I've come according to invitation," he remarked, naively. "You'll remember about a month ago you were good enough to say that when I could show you that I'd started out on the road for fortune you'd give me the pleasure of a chat."

Jabez eyed him with a queer look on his rubicund face.

"That's so," he said, constrainedly.

"Well, I've come to tell you I've started," said Geoffrey. "Oh, by-the-bye, did you take my tip and buy Onions?"

Mr. Rinowe threw his half-smoked cigar into the fire. This action was very expressive of his feelings.

"Burn Onions!" he exclaimed, emphatically.

"Ah; I'm sorry," said Geoffrey, artlessly. "Now, I did. You'll laugh when I tell you. The very morning after our conversation somebody, who thought he knew something, poured a bucketful of Onions on the market, thinking to go a bear. A whisper of something queer sent 'em down. They stuck at 14¾, at which figure my man bought all he could get. The report has sent 'em up to 15¼, consequently the man in the know is landed for a cool thousand, and I've got it. Now, how does that strike you for a start?"

Jabez Rinowe writhed and his face went the colour of beet. For once in his life words failed him. Geoffrey was enjoying himself immensely.

"It's a mint to a jujube that the would-be bear was working on probability that didn't come off," he went on, rubbing in the acid mercilessly. "Don't you think so, sir?"

Jabez went to the sideboard and gulped down a large dose of spirits. Turning, he strode to the fireplace and proceeded deliberately to cut the end from a cigar. Then, lifting his head, he regarded the young man with a forced smile.

"That's about it," he said, painfully. "See here, now. You're a cuter fellow than I imagined." He stretched forward and, gripping his shoulder, marched him into the hall. "Turn right in there, sonny," he jerked out, opening the door of the drawing-room. "I reckon you'll find somebody who'll be pleased to see you."

Then, re-entering the library, he shut himself in for half an hour to "simmer down."

Bond Purchase.

Chicago, Oct. 18.—Telegrams showered on Secretary of the Treasury Shaw today when he returned to the Auditorium hotel from Warsaw, Ind. The messages were largely congratulations on the success of the bond purchases ordered by the secretary.

"My information from the department at Washington today," said Mr. Shaw, "is that the treasury offer has resulted in the purchase of $9,000,000 face value, actual value about $20,000,000."

Harvey Fiske & Co. furnished the $5,000,000 of bonds on which an option was given Secretary Shaw at 137¾.

Mr. Shaw later left for Detroit. On Monday night he will be at Indianapolis.

There is a curious looking animal in South Africa that looks for all the world like a piec? of coast with four legs, a head and a tail. It resembles a pussy cat about the forehead and ears, but its nose is distinctly that of a rat, while its tail is not very dissimilar to that of a fox. This strange animal is called the aardwolf and doubtless dwells in South Africa because, judged by his looks, he would not be admitted into good animal society anywhere else.

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THE ROSS PLATFORM

Whereas, in the opinion of this convention, the continued prosperity of the Yukon territory depends chiefly on the efforts of individual miners and prospectors, whose work is conducted under most difficult conditions, and the stability of the business of the country will be insured by furnishing regular employment to workmen; therefore, be it

Resolved, That every effort should be made by the government to secure, and such changes adopted as would secure, the ends desired. That this convention most strongly recommends:

1. Reduction of fees for miners' licenses and for recording and renewing claims.

2. The abolition of payment of commutation for assessment work, and compelling the performance of assessment work upon the claim itself, or upon the claims as grouped.

3. The adoption of such regulations as will encourage the working of low grade ground and the development of quartz mining.

4. The amendment of the mining regulations in such way as to provide a mode by which, upon satisfying reasonable conditions holders of mining claims may obtain crown grants of the same.

GOVERNMENT AID FOR SMELTER.

Whereas, Large copper deposits are proven to exist in the vicinity of Whitehorse, and the work already done on the same has demonstrated their immense value; and

Whereas, In order to secure the working of such property, the establishment of a smelter is necessary, and the establishment of such smelter would create large employment for workingmen, and create a market for the coal known to exist in the territory, and lead to the large development of the southern portion of the district; therefore,

Resolved, That this convention recommend the encouragment by the Dominion government of the establishment of such smelter, by such aid in the way of bonus, or otherwise, as may be deemed best.

TEST MILL AND ASSAY OFFICE.

Resolved, That the interests of this territory demand the establishment of a quartz test mill by the government for the free testing of ore in order to encourage and develop quartz mining and the establishment of an assay office, to be conducted by the government in connection with the government mint.

CANCEL TREADGOLD CONCESSION.

Whereas, The supply of water and power to the mines on the creeks is one of the most serious questions o the day in the Yukon territory; and

Whereas, In the opinion of the convention, the matter of such supply on fair and reasonable terms should best be dealt with by the government itself, and should not be left to private individuals; therefore, be it

Resolved, That the government be reqiested immediately to make careful examination and obtain reports upon the subject with a view of cancelling forthwith the Treadgold concession, and undertaking such supply as a national enterprise.

OTHERS HELD BY FRAUD.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this convention many of the concessions now held were obtained by fraud and imposition; that it is in the interest of this territory that such concessions should be annulled, and to that end that inquiry should be set on foot to ascertain the circumstances of such fraud and imposition, and action taken by the attorney general of Canada in the premises.

MINING MACHINERY DUTY FREE.

Resolved, That in the opinion of this convention it would greatly tend to assist in the working and development of mines in the territory, to permit the importation of mining machinery of a class not manufactured in Canada, free from all customs duty.

WHOLLY ELECTIVE COUNCIL.

That the convention views with satisfaction the increase of the number of elective members of the Yukon council, and urgently recommends that the membership of the council be made wholly elective, without delay; and further, that all matters of a purely local character be committed to the council for deliberation and determination.

AGAINST UNNECESSARY CONCESSIONS.

Resolved, That a policy should be adopted which would prevent the obtaining of concessions for hydraulicing, except in places where the dirt is of such low grade that it could not profitably be worked by other methods; and that before any hydraulic lease should issue, notice should be given by the applicant by publication in the newspapers of his intention of applying for such lease, so as to enable protests to be entered against the granting of the same; and that the owners of hydraulic concessions already granted should be compelled to carry out the strict terms of their leases, and that in default of their so doing, their leases should be cancelled.

Only Fanat'cs Left

Chicago, Oct. 18.—Brigadier-General Frederick D. Grant arrived in Chicago today from the Philippines. General Grant was asked as to the condition of that part of the islands over which he was in command. He said:

"The condition of Samar is very promising, or was when I left. I guess I drove them all to perfect peace. There is some little trouble with a lot of fanatics over the so-called Deos, who are irresponsible. They are treacherous and spend most of their time in attempting to commit robberies and depredations. They are regular bandits. Their deeds should not be charged against the insurgents."

Gen. Grant will remain only a day in Chicago, as he is hurrying to get to Washington.

Auditorium—Only Country Girl.

MUST BE WORKED.

I shall advocate the adoption of regulations compelling the actual working of claims. — James Hamilton Ross.

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