

She certainly had none; wherever he went she seemed to be willing to follow. In a very little while the two started off. It was Brinkley who led this time, Matt walking along beside him like a confiding child.

"By the way, Matt," he said, presently, "you told me once of treasures hidden among the sandhills. Did anybody ever find any?"

"Not that I know on."

"William Jones, for instance?"

"No. Least ways I don't know."

"Well, what would you say, Matt, if I told you that I had found one?"

"If you?"

"Yes. I wonder if you can keep a secret? Yes, on reflection I think you can. Now, before you go any further, Matt, first place your hand in mine, and promise never to mention until I give permission what I am about to confide in you now."

Matt's curiosity was aroused.

"All right," she replied, eagerly, "I shan't tell."

"Very good," replied Brinkley; "we will now proceed."

They passed on among the sandhills and came to the entrance of the cave. Brinkley removed the stones and sand from the hole and entered. Breathless with curiosity Matt followed. They reached the bottom. Brinkley struck a light and pointed out to her all the wonderful treasures which the cave contained. It was such a surprise to the girl that for a time she could do nothing but stare and stare in speechless wonder. Whistling gaily, Brinkley turned about the casks of rum and brandy and thrust his hands into the bags and let the gleaming gold slip through his fingers.

Matt's amazement turned to awe.

"Don't," she said, in a fearful whisper; "it belongs to the fairies."

Brinkley laughed.

"It belongs to a very substantial fairy, Matt, but I don't think that to-day I will mention that fairy's name. Did you ever see so much money in all your life before, Matt?"

She shook her head, but her eyes were still fixed upon the gold.

"I see," observed Brinkley, flippantly, "the sight of that gold fascinates you. Well, so it did me at first, but you see what use does. I can regard it now with comparative calmness. However, I have a particular wish to accustom you to the sight of wealth, therefore, I shall bring you here and show you this now and again. Come, Matt, tell me what you would do if you were very rich, if all this flotsam and jetsam, in fact, belonged to you?"

Without the slightest hesitation Matt replied:

"I should give it to you—leastways half of it."

"Ah, the reply is characteristic, and clearly shows you are not at present fitted to become the possessor of riches. But I shall bring you to the proper state of mind in time, no doubt. The next time I ask you a similar question you will propose to give me a third, the next an eighth, and so on, until you will finally come to a proper state of mind, and decline to give me any at all. And now that I have made you the sharer of my secret we will go."

They left the cave once more and made their way back across the sandhills, Brinkley pausing to obliterate their footprints as they went. When they had proceeded some distance he paused and took the girl's hand.

"Good-by, Matt," said he. "If it wasn't for that promised smashing I should certainly see you home."

"Then do," returned Matt. "I don't care if he does smash me!"

"Probably not, but I do. It would be an episode in your career which it would not be pleasant to reflect upon—therefore, good-by, Matt—and—God bless you, my girl!"

He gave her a fatherly salute upon the forehead; a bright flush overspread her cheek as she bounded away. Brinkley watched her until she was out of sight, then he turned and strolled quietly on in the direction of the caravan.

"It's a strange game," he said, "and requires careful waiting. I wonder what my next move ought to be?"

He thought very deeply, but when he reached the caravan he found he had come to no definite conclusion as to his plans. He therefore partook cheerfully of the repast which Tim had prepared for him, and after he had smoked a couple of pipes in the open air he retired to rest.

The next morning he began pondering again.

"I have got my trump card," he said to himself, "but how to play up to it? I have a splendid hand, but it will require skillful managing if I am to win the game. One false move would do for me, for my opponents are crafty as foxes, and they are two against one. What is my right move, I wonder? I wish some good fairy would guide me!"

He took out his pipe, which was his usual consolator, and smoked while he took a few turns on the greensward outside the caravan.

"I think I'll pay a domiciliary visit to Mr. Monk," he said. "I can meet him now on pretty equal terms. If I hint a few things to him the amiable gentleman may think of becoming just."

He called up Tim and sent him on some trivial errand down to the village. As soon as he was well out of the way Brinkley entered the caravan, produced some papers from the inner pocket of his coat, and locked them up securely in his trunk.

"So far so good," he said. "My amiable friend may not be in an amiable mood, and I don't wish him to get any advantage of me."

(To be continued.)

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