

An Independent Man

Written for Western Home Monthly by Chendon Latchford

"I tell you, Jack, you don't measure up. Why boy, you are lazy! You are twenty-two years old and you haven't earned a cent independently yet. When I was your age I was working as a mechanic at \$75.00 a month. Some day I hope you will be manager of this concern, but if you keep on like this I can't put my affairs in your hands. I believe you are lazy, Jack; yes, right down lazy," he added as the boy threw up his head defiantly. "If you are not," he said, as he read the denial in his son's eyes. "Why don't you get out and work? Show me that you are capable!"

"Oh, but say, Dad," said the son in reply, "I do work; why how about all last winter in the shops? I plugged away there. I like it, but you wouldn't let me stay. I was coming on fine when I got hauled up for not living within the wages I made."

"Yes, Jack, my boy, that is just the trouble, I want you to learn the value of money. You can never become the manager of this corporation until you do. I would like to know, if I should be forced to retire, that my business would not go

days later at the little town of Kenting, twenty miles east of St. Louis, with a capital of \$13.90 and a dogged determination to "show the governor."

As he walked up the main street of the little town, deep in the thought of what he could do to increase this capital, he came upon a large roadster, standing in the middle of the road, in front of a hotel; and which, from the gestures of an elderly gentleman, and a man, who from his appearance was the clerk of the hotel; was evidently the object of some discussion.

"I tell you," he heard the older man say, "I positively have to return to the city by five, my business demands it."

"I am very sorry, Mr. Carruthers, but I don't know of anyone who can repair your car. The village livery man is away at present and will not be home till late to-night, and there is no one else who knows about automobiles here," replied the clerk in a harassed voice.

"I know something about them, sir," volunteered Jack, breaking into the conversation at this point. "I think I can repair your car," and then as the gentle-



A German Caricature of the Tight-Fist.
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to rack and ruin just because my son was a spendthrift and ignorant of the value of money. How would you like to strike out for yourself for a while? Be your own boss—I'll give you a ticket as far as St. Louis and a little money, say \$15.00, and with that as capital you can start out. When I was a boy I started with that amount, and I want you to be a better man than your father."

Charles Sherman had been for a number of years the manager of the Sherman Motor Company. His son, Jack, was to follow in his footsteps when the father should retire, and it was with this idea that the boy had gone into the shops to get a technical experience in the building of the cars by which the name of Sherman had become famous. Jack had been delighted with the work and soon became a very good machinist. Tinkering about machinery had ever been a hobby with him, and he was right at home in the factory.

When his father endeavored to teach Jack the financial end of the business, however, he had to confess to himself that the boy was a complete failure. He could grasp the principles that are used in a big organization like that, but he could not appreciate the value of money. Jack had always had a certain amount of money at his own command since his mother's death, and he had made use of it not wisely but too well. This, then, was the reason for the father saying that it was best that Jack should go out and make his own way in the world. The father knew only too well that it would be the making of the young fellow. The son had the same fighting spirit and strong determination that had made the father a prominent man in the business world, and he knew that if Jack once started he would stop only at the finish. So this is how Jack came to step off the train two

man turned around, "I have had a little experience with cars of this kind." He was about to add that his father was the manufacturer of them, but remembering that his father had said he was too dependent, he simply said, "With your permission I will start to work at once."

"Do so by all means," replied Mr. Carruthers, with an appraising glance at the well knit figure, and noting the look of resolution in Jack's eyes. "You are a godsend indeed. If you can repair the car, I shall offer you a permanent position as its driver. My man, McGuire," he added in explanation, "had the bad manners to get intoxicated while I was attending to some business in the town, and I am left without a chauffeur, for I discharged the man immediately. I will not have intoxication among any of my employees," he warned.

Jack, however, did not hear the last half of his remarks, for he was already busy with the motor. The trouble he found was trifling indeed, and it was only the work of a few moments to fix it. Almost as soon as his employer had finished speaking he had the car running and had slipped into the driver's seat.

"You are quick at any rate, young man," said his new employer. "Can you run into the city, do you think, in half an hour? It is imperative that I reach the bank before five o'clock, and it is now 4.20."

"Yes, I can do it I think," Jack said, as he slipped the car into gear, but you must be prepared for a hot ride, sir."

The car glided along smoothly and Jack felt his pulse pound exultantly as he felt the car respond to every touch. This was to be a ride indeed for St. Louis was twenty miles away. As they shot around the fence corners, through farm-yards and out on to the turn-pike, Jack had time to think of the good fortune that had already