

PARTED BY GOLD

"I've begged off," said Jack, quietly. "I mean to go, and I'm going to ask you fellows to go with me."
"I'm much obliged," said Pop.
The rest laughed satirically.
"You'll come," said Jack, "if you will cheer the pirate up; come, Beau, don't be disagreeable."
"Well, we'll go," said Beaumont, "if Pop and Walton will, for it's my opinion it will need four to keep each other going on the mutual encouragement system."

The other two were talked over, and poor Jack, highly satisfied with his success, lost a few pounds with great enjoyment and walked home to his own chambers.
He walked, though his private cab and high-stepping cab were waiting for him.
"I'll stretch my legs," said he to his man, "get off to bed."

CHAPTER II.

Jack Hamilton's was one of those few instances of a man getting his deserts. He came of a good but a poor family. His mother, a widow, had just sufficient to start Jack on the legal road of life and lived long enough to see him in the robe of the barrister.
Jack was always a gentle-hearted and hard-working fellow, and he persevered far more than one-half of his associates to attain that necessity of a barrister's existence, a brief.
A brief came, and Jack astonished his friends by carrying it out well. He was not eloquent as the term goes, but was possessed of a certain honest, straightforward persuasiveness that carried the jury and won him his case.

He was to be a great lawyer, but fortune stepped in. His uncle, Sir William Facewell, died unexpectedly, and the Facewell property, representing twenty thousand a year, fell to "dear old Jack," while the title went begging to the next cousin, a confirmed bachelor with a snug fortune that in time might also roll into Jack Hamilton's coffers.

Riches spell a great many men, but they didn't spoil Jack. He had been a soft-hearted, lovable fellow on three hundred, he remained so on twenty thousand. What our readers have already seen of him will show them the man better than all we can say in description. He was handsome, young, and an ardent believer in the virtue and inborn goodness of women. Apple women or countess it was all one to him, both were worthy of respect in his eyes and received it at his hand. He was generous to a fault, and necessarily the victim of all sorts of impostures—impostures that, however frequently they might occur, never lessened his belief in the honesty of human nature and the fine excellence of women.

The night of the card party was cold, but the next was colder, and the three men of the world—Popton, Walton and Beaumont—were not in the best of humor as they drove to the Royal Signet, for which performance they seemed to entertain the highest contempt.
"Have you insured your life, Jack?" asked Beaumont, as the carriage rolled into the darker region of the East End.
"We'd better telegraph when we get to this confounded place," suggested

A NERVOUS BREAKDOWN

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—Miss FLO KELLY, 476 So. 14th St., Newark, N. J.

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and reached the mystic presence of the "wings."
He stared, and as it was his first visit behind the curtain he had reason.

The scenery that looked so beautifully finished, so carefully painted, from the front, was here revealed in all its monstrous coarseness, great layers of paint with the hairs from the brushes sticking to them at every inch, dabs of tinsel, splashes of whitewash and streaks of blue for the delicate sky that seemed as pretty as the real thing.

"Jack drew his head back against the wall, and said, 'I say, you know,' he exclaimed, 'what a sell. Is it possible that this can be the great scene of the pirate's cave we saw only a few moments since? Why—"
Beaumont nudged Popton's arm. "Look at him," he muttered, "the picture of deluded innocence. Isn't it good? Poor old Jack!"
"Well, I never would have believed it," continued Jack, "and it's—eh?—rather dirty, too, so you say."

"Yes, although there's wind and draught enough to carry off a mountain of the light stuff," growled Walton. "Hush, here comes the manager."

A short, thickset, pleasant-looking man came forward and touched his hat—tilted it, in fact, off his forehead—by way of salutation.
"Your servant, gentlemen," he said. "Come to take a look behind, eh? Rather different from the front, isn't it?"

"Yes," said Jack, in his open, engaging way, that always won its way at the first onset, "yes, very different, but we are very much obliged to you for permission; I understand it is an exceptional one?"
"Well," said the manager, with another tilt of his hat, "you see I didn't know that you were 'nobs'—excuse the word—or I shouldn't have been so particular. No fear of gents like you, it's the whipper-snapper young clerks and that sort of thing that I object to. I keep my company select. Never mind what goes on at the West, say I, we'll have it all square at the Signet. I look after my young women, gentlemen, as if they were my own, which they are while their engagement lasts and they are in this house."

Jack nodded with candid approval. "You are quite right," he said, "and I honor you for it. We have been very much entertained by the play—"
Before he could get any further a whistle blew, half a dozen men rushed past them, utterly regardless of their presence, the wings, among which they were standing, began to shake and move, the tread of a number of feet pattered around and above them, and the manager suddenly started into life. "This way, gentlemen; mind the dust, it's pretty thick; this way," he said, hurrying off; "they're clearing

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Suited to all ages, you should get a few 25 cent boxes from the drug store and keep them handy.

for the first scene of the extravaganza."

The four gentlemen followed the manager quickly, fighting their way through a stream of carpenters, ballet girls and gasmen, and entered the greenroom. It was a large lofty place, with a number of chairs, a round table, upon which was scattered a heap of dresses and stage properties, and the walls were covered with old playbills and portraits of dead-and-gone theatrical celebrities.

"Take a chair, gentlemen," said the manager, his hat all sides of his head at once. "I'll be back directly the scenes are set, by your leave," and, with a tilt of adieu, he ran off.

The four friends looked at each other with comical bewilderment. "Well, exclaimed Beaumont, "this is a sweet game! What will become of us?"

"A full reception of the whole company and stand treat all around; champagne and oysters," mournfully ejaculated Popton. "I've done this sort of thing before."

"Thank Heaven, Jack will have to pay for it!" said Walton, laughing. "It only wants the presence of the pirate to demand our heads, and with an onion to soak in our blood to finish it."

"By Jove! here he is, then," said Jack, and he arose as the hero of the melodrama, still attired in his dancing costume, pushed open the door and entered.

He stood still for a moment as if embarrassed by their unexpected presence, but after that moment doffed his plumed cap, and, with a stage bow, said, in strangely low accents, considering the deep tone with which he had been declaiming his part so short a time previously:

"Your servant, gentlemen. I thought the room was empty."

"And so it ought to be," said Jack, smiling, "for we are intruders."

"Not at all," said the pirate, mildly, "not at all. By the way, sir, looking hard at Jack. I think I have seen your face before. Did I not see you in Mr. Puff's?"

"Yes," said Jack, "it was of him I purchased the basket for your benefit, which I hope has been a bumper."

A faint flush of pride suffused the parts of the pirate's face where the

rouse was not, and he inclined his head slightly.
"I thank you, sir; yes, it is a good house; the public does not desert its old favorites, sir."

"Old," said Jack, raising his brows; "come, not old, surely?"
The pirate nodded decisively. "Yes, sir, getting old and used up," he said, with a hollow laugh, "but I manage to keep away off the stage. I hope, how—how did you think—"
"Splendidly," said Jack, quietly. "You carried me with you; eh, Walton, was it not capital?"

"Yes," said Walton, and the others chimed in, more to please Jack than the worn-out actor.
"Yes, you played capital, and with great spirit."
Again the pirate inclined his head and with the same heightening color. "I have played up to Keen, gentlemen," he said.

"They've all played up to O'Keen," muttered Walton.
"But times have changed now, the drama is not what it—"
Ring, ring! ding, dong! and the callboy's voice drowned his low one. "Ladies of the ballet, and the Spirit of the Deep."

A rush of feet and a buzz of voices followed the summons, and Jack, walking to the door, saw a group of ballet girls pattering past in their gauze dresses, followed by a crowd of men and boys, made up in twill and green calico—which would look like satin from the front—as demons.
A minute after the Spirit of the Deep, likewise in green, but further adorned with a dazzling tunic of tin, glistering with epagles, burst into the room.

"I'm going on," he said, addressing the pirate, hurriedly. "Mind, Anna, bella, she's got the one all right and will pull through if she can get over the nerves. Look after her, I can't have the scene spoiled, mind!"

"Very well," replied the pirate, anxiously. "She will do her best. Would you like to see the scene, gentlemen?" he continued, turning to the four friends. "You can see it from the wings; it's nicely set, I believe."

The gentlemen followed him to a vacant spot at the wings from which they could see the scene of one of the few extravaganzas.
The pirate, after fidgeting nervously for a few moments, murmured something and turned away.
Jack looked at him curiously.

"Wonder who Annabella is?" she Popton, looking, too. "Seems rather nervous about her, doesn't he?"
"Hush!" said Walton, "they can hear you in front, Pop. How quiet they are, and what a mass of heads they look. This is the first night of the extravaganza, evidently."

"Look out!"
The warning came just in time, for a moment after a boy with a lighted torch dashed past them, leaving a strong smell of burning spirit and a streak of smoke behind him.
"Whew!" said Beaumont, through his handkerchief. "That's pleasant—what's he saying?"

ROYAL YEAST CAKES

"Oh, announcing the queen; and I say, look there," replied Walter, smiling his arm.
At the next wing stood the pirate, beside him a young girl just trembling between girlhood and womanhood.
She was nestled as close to him as possible, her face turned up to his with a sweet, encouraging smile that contrasted strongly with the anxious look on his rouge-smearing one.
She was calm and composed enough, but his hand, twined lovingly around her waist, trembled with suppressed nervousness.

"You—you—are sure, Mary, you have got it all right?" he asked, in a hollow voice. "For heaven's sake, do not forget the cue—I fear for nothing else—do not forget the cue."
"Don't be frightened, father, dear," replied the girl, and her voice sounded rarely pure and sweet. "Don't, oh, don't look so distressed! I am sure I shall go through it all right. There, there," and she stretched on tiptoe to his quivering lips. "You will make me nervous if you tremble so. Come, dear, dear father, be brave!"

He groaned and turned his head aside.
"Mary," he muttered, "I never thought to live to see this. I always prayed against this, I—"
She raised her finger, pale and white enough without the powder with which it was covered, and pressed it upon his lip.

"Not a word more, dear, not a word. It is for the best, trust that; and see, I don't mind. I'm only too glad to help you and my own darling. There, the boy has called my name. Onemore kiss."

She drew his head down again, and tripped past the four at the wing onto the stage, picking up a silver wand as she ran.
Her robe brushed Jack as he made room for her, and her dark eyes rested for a moment on his face as she paused for a second on the edge of the stage.

Jack looked after her with a heightened color, and a bright, admiring light in his honest eyes, and he leaned forward to catch her first words with an eagerness that necessitated his being dragged back by Beaumont.
The pirate remained on the same spot, his irresolute finger fidgeting at his lips, his anxious face fixed upon the slight figure of the girl, where, in her character of the Fairy Queen, she stood haranguing the Spirit of the Deep and his attendant satellites.

(To be continued.)

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