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J. E. LLOYD sank, exhausted into his chair.

Richard the Brazen.

By CYRUS TOWNSEND BRADY. Author of "For the Freedom of the Sea," "The Southerners," Etc.,

EDWARD PEPLE. Author of "A Broken Rosary,"
"The Prince Chap," Etc.

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[CONTINUED.]

"But-but," stammered the champion of Longmatt, "I don't understand. Why, the legislature is fixed! 1-1

"So did I!" asserted the cattle king. "Wrong again, gentlemen!" chuckled the little Irishman. "That august and honorable body can't-be-bought!" "Explain!" cried Mr. Renwyck, tottering to his feet. "What do you mean, Michael? What do you know

about it, anyway?" "Lots," laughed Mr. Corrigan. "Besides, it's very simple when you get down to the facts. You see, there was gentleman in New York the other day-the Hon. Mr. Kinwait, I believe he is called-a man wielding quite a big stick among certain members of the legislature. You, Mr. Williams, mixed a toddy for him in San Antonio, while Jacob took him out to lunch in New York and presented him with a

The Texan and the New Yorker glared savagely, but Uncle Michael smiled blandly and continued:

"The Hon. Mr. Einwalt, being thus beholden to both of you for your generous hospitality, became doubtful as to which to serve, and while struggling with his india rubber conscience a third party came along and offered him board and lodging in the penitentiary. All things being equal, he forgot both toddy and cigar and dumped his influence on the side of sweet Olivia and the Peace and Good Will Realty company. Am I clear?"

He was more than clear, for both of the old casehardened schemers saw at a glance how cleverly they had been overreached by a little one horse organization that masked a serpent's fang under the cloak of a plous, inoffensive title, with a guileless individual named Fishcall as its outward ex-

"Good Lord," sighed Bill Williams. "and I sold 'em the land to do it with!" Mr. Renwyck had done the same, but had not the grace to admit it.

"Who the devil is back of this Peace and Good Will Bealty company?" he demanded, forgetting the presence of the ladies in his anger and chagrin. The little Irishman made as graceful a bow as his embonpoint would per-

"You!" gasped Mr. Renwyck. "Yes, Jakle, dear. I also interviewed

the Hon. Mr. Kinwait." "But, man," stormed Mr. Renwyck. "don't you know that half my fortune is invested in that deal? You-you've

Bill Williams laid his hand on Mr. Corrigan's shoulder and spoke calmly. but reproachfully: "It was my pet scheme, Mike, and

you knew it. Half my pile is gone too. I didn't think you'd do me up

"I was merciful," said Uncle Michael coolly. "I left you each half. You won't starve. I might have taken all." If Mr. Corrigan fancied that he was ironing out the crinkled shirt of trouble by proving to the rivals that neither one had been successful, he found himself vastly mistaken. The tempest was loosed again, and Richard the Brazen took a turn at the thunder box.

"Look here," he cried, striding up to Uncle Michael and spinning that portly little man about without deference to his age or size, "Mr. Corrigan, if you were twenty years younger I'd give you the soundest thrashing you ever had in all your life!"

At this surprising development the entire company, with the exception of the lawyer, were too amazed to do aught but stare at the furious young man. The furious young man continued, oblivious to his surroundings:

"I came to you in confidence, sir, as my attorney, at your own suggestion, and asked advice. I was helpless, as you knew, hanging between duty to dad and my pledge to Mr. Renwyck. You've swindled us all, sir-these gentlemen of their barbors, me of what I placed confidently in your hands-my

"Honor!" speered Mr. Renwyck.

"What!" bellowed the cattle king. "You knew all about it, Dick, and you didn't tell me! Oh, Dick, Dick!" Richard turned to explain to his reproachful father, but Mr. Renwyck turned upon the young man fiercely.

"Ha!" he almost screamed. "So that's the reason you couddn't sign a draft? You had sold me to Michael. had you-sold me when in the kindness of my heart I tried to help un impoverished Englishman? Englishman!" he laughed derisively. "A spy. a traitor to me-yes, and to his own flesh and blood too!" The financier paused for breath, then wheeled upon his brother-in-law. "And you." he stormed-"you, with your arguments and your chuckling mask that hides a rascal! That's what you've been laughing at for the past three days, is ityou and your psalm singing Mr. Fishcall? You cheated me out of my land at Olivia! You've blackmailed the Texan legislature! You-you-you"-"Oh, Jacob, darling!" sobbed Mrs. Renwyck, coming to his side as be

"It is perfectly disgracering son Miss Schermerly. "I am almost tempted to go upstairs!" However, she successfully resisted temptation

It seemed at this stage that poor little Mr. Corrigan had not a leg of honor to stand upon, and, to be correct, he did not attempt to stand, but sank into a seat and laughed until an apoplectic stroke seemed imminent. He was most aggravating, too, when he laughed. "Goodness!" now observed the sol emn Mr. Van der Awe, "He's worse

than my poor Imogene." But Mr. Corrigan at last mastered his emotions, arose and, dabbing his eyes with his handkerchief, began to explain his case. "Jacob," he said, "upon my honor,

Richard never told me a single thing that I did not already know. My colupany was in the field long before he came to New York, and here are my papers to prove it. I knew every move of both of you, and while you and Bill were treating the legislature to whisky and cigars I got into the game my-

Richard heaved a sigh of deep relief, and old Bill Williams laughed. "Look here, Mike," he said, "you've got all the money you want. Why in the name of common sense are you

self. Our brazen young friend here

had nothing to do with it whatever."

wading about in deep water harbors?" "Several reasons," chuckled Uncle Michael. "First, I wanted the fun of the thing; second, I wanted a rap at Jacob, who is inclined to think he knows everything in the world; third. I wanted a joke on my friend, Bill Williams; fourth, I wanted to prove to you two old gray rats that your teeth are getting dulled by age; fifth, I had at heart the real welfare of the great state of Texas; sixth, I would not see helpless legislature led astray; seventh, the Peace and Good Will Realty company is a bridal present I intend making to the son and daughter

of two of my friends." "What friends?" asked the two frenzied financiers together. "Bill and Jake!" answered Mr. Cor-

rigan, bursting into another laugh. Four people flushed, two in unger. the other two for secret reasons of

"Now, listen, boys," continued Uncle Michael earnestly. "You two have had a very foolish quarrel, and it's time to shake hands and make it up. So far as your harbor schemes are concerned, you are both out of the running. I own it-every share. I will turn my interest over to Richard, to do with as he chooses, but if I know him-and I'm inclined to think I do-I have a pretty fair idea as to how he will act. What do you say, Dicky.

Richard came forward and grasped the lawyer's hand.

"Mr. Corrigan," he said, "forgive me for what I said just now. I take it all back. You're the finest counsel on

"Oho!" chuckled the little man. "Changed your opinion, have you? Well, go on."

"I couldn't begin to thank you for what you have done for me," continued Richard, "and what that is I am now going to confess. I have been longing to do it for a week. But first let's settle this harbor tangle. I suggest that dad and Mr. Renwyck consolidate their interests with me and we'll open up at Olivia. Olivia is the best place for a harbor, anyway."-

"Bully!" chuckled Mr. Corrigan, rubbing his plump hands until the skin was almost peeled. "Well, Jake?

"Um! Not a bad idea," admitted the cattle king, with a flickering smile. "What do you say, Renwyck?"

"I think," said the old financier slowly-"I think I'd rather wait for the confession this young man has mentioned. From what I know of him already it may lead to complications." Richard smiled hopefully at Harriet and stepped to the center of the hall. He made a clean breast of it, beginning at his meeting with the real Lord Croyland, the automobile accideut and the cool effrontery of the earl in taking the name of Richard Williams for his personal convenience. The Texan then told how he had been met by his host at the railroad station and how he had been mistaken for the

Englishman. At this point Mr. Renwyck interrupted bim. "Excuse me," he said, "but why did you pose as some one else?" "Well, you see," confessed Richard.

blushing to the roots of his hair. "you informed me at the time that the Williams family was a-well, a generation of vipers, to be exact, and, besides, I knew that dad would rave if he knew

"You scalawag!" laughed the cuttle king, "What were you up to any

"I'm coming to that, dad," answered the young man, shyly casting another glance in Harriet's direction. That young lady had already turned for flight up the stairs when Richard

stopped her with: "No: wait, please, Miss Harriet. This concerns you. As I couldn't come here in my own name, Mr. Renwyck-

"But why did you wish to be received at all?" the host cut in, while the eyes of Uncle Michael sparkled ex-

"Mr. Renwyck," said Richard boldly, now flinging caution to the winds, that day when I dragged your daughter out of a milling bunch of cattle l swore to follow her if I had to crawl to Jericho on my hands and knees!" "What!" cried the New Yorker. springing to his feet. "Were you the

"Yes, sir," admitted the young Texan, casting a look of tenderness at a certain young lady who was busily trying to keep down her blushes. . "Well, I never!" burst out Mrs. Renwyck. "I-I thought he was a very

funny Englishman!"

Hawk. Go on; go on!" This Richard proceeded to do, giving a full account of his tribulations, but with such deep appreciation of their humorous side that the people most imposed upon could not find it in their

hearts to be angry with him. "You see," he said in conclusion, "1 was bowled over by a statue of Napoleon, frozen out by a foreign draft and was apparently caught red handed as a burglar. As for the diamonds. perhaps Mr. Corrigan can tell us more bout them!"

He did not think it necessary to mention the matter of the letters and hoped that Harriet and Imogene might also be spared a confession. In this the

young people were lucky, for Uncle Michael's man had caught both the ight fingered gentlemen-Roddy-poddykins' expert and scientific assistant proving to be a notorious crook-who were subsequently lodged in a safe retreat which the Hon. Mr. Kluwait missed by the skin of his teeth, and means were found to keep them silent as to Mr. Fitzgeorge's adventure in the billiard room, although Mr. Renwyck and Michael had to be told of it.

"So that's the way the matter stands. is it?" asked Mr. Renwyck, with a smile. "You two have been making love under my very nose. I said you were a burglar, sir, and now you prove it." He glanced at his daughter from beneath his shaggy brows. "I suppose I needn't ask if it has all been de-

cided without consulting me?" "Well, no," grinned Richard. "I hoped it would have been, but something always popped up to interrupt us. I should like your permission, sir, to con-

The financier studied the floor in silence, making no reply till Richard presently touched his shoulder and spoke again "Mr. Renwyck," he said, with a twin-

kle in his eye, "don't forget that I have a libel suit against you. I should hate to run off with a lady while her father pined in jail."

"Oh, go 'long with you!" laughed the millionaire. "I was thinking of the Peace and Good Will Realty company. I guess I'm in with you. Come, gentlemen, let's go into the library and look over Michael's papers."

"Dicky," smiled old Bill Williams to his son, "you're a scamp, and you know it! But I'd give a dozen harbors to see you happy." He placed a caressing arm about the young man's shoulder and whispered into his ear: "Go in and win, Dick, my boy. She's worth it all!"

Mr. Corrigan rubbed his hands and turned to his brother-in-law. "If you had listened to me at first, Jacob, you"-

"Oh, shut up, Michael!" laughed Mr. Renwyck. "I give in. I'm down, but liams; I have something in the library besides papers, which I keep for friends!"

CHAPTER XXV. S the library door closed Mis. Renwyck and Miss Schermerly rose to take their leave, the mother with a happy smile at Harriet, the spinster with a long, re-

proachful frown. "Dear me!" the matron whispered to her friend. "So Harriet isn't going to be a nobleman's wife, after all. How very disappointing!"

"One of nature's noblemen, dear Julia," said Miss Schermerly, with a complete reversal of opinion. "I always thought him most distinguished,



"Yes," murmured Harriet faintly. and think of the money they are to have from dear Michael and that-ah-

Bible company!" Richard and Harriet were not yet alone, for Mr. Cornelius Van der Awe still sat in a huge rocking chair, the picture of woe and misery.

"Do you know," he murmured, apropos of nothing in particular, "everybody in the world seems happy-except poor me!"

"Cornelius!" called a shrill voice, and, looking up, all three spied a flushed face and a disheveled head that were poking over the banisters. "Cornelius, you make me tired! Go out on the lawn and wait until I fix my bair. I never saw such a miserable, dejected, silly boy! I declare, I'm almost sorry that I'm not engaged to Mr. Williams instead of you!"

The head disappeared, the melancholy lover departed, with a dazed and gloomy air, and Harriet and Richard were alone at last. For a moment pei-

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their spoke; then he took her unresist-

ing hand. "Harriet," he whispered, and now his voice for the first time trembled-"Harriet, do you understand why I stooped to this deception? I tried to tell you over and over again, but feared to lose you in the telling. I would gladly have faced death a thousand times rather than deceive you, and yet-for you I did it. Did you knowdid you dream that I was an Ameri-

Harriet laughed. "I guessed you were not an Englishman by the dreadful time you had with Lord Croyland's monocle. Really it was most pathetic!" Richard took the frail silk cord be-

tween his thumb and finger, whirling the glass around his head in the manner of a lariat "It has served its purpose, and now

we'll smash the last emblem of the foreigner." "No; don't," interrupted Harriet quickly. "Let me keep it as a souve-

nir of your realistic impersonation." He dropped it into her hand and

"But did you suspect that I was "The cowboy?" she finished. "I-I

hoped you were." "God bless you for that!" he cried. "And, now that you know, may I tell you again that I have loved you, worshiped you, since that first sweet moment when I pulled you from your pony and held you in my arms? May I tell you that never for a moment have I ceased to dream of you, wanting you as I wanted nothing else in

the whole wide world?" "You-you didn't think that way at first" she smiled

"How? What do you mean?" Harriet hesitated, blushed and then

"Well-you-you put me down on the grass, gave me that awful whiskythen forgot all about me-to go after your-horrid cows!"

It was Richard's turn to laugh. "But, you see," he explained, "it was duty that called me then, even as another duty calls me now. I'm afraid I must leave you to look after an English calf." He smiled at Harriet's look of blank astonishment and continued, with a laugh: "It is all on account of poor Woolsey Bills. I thought he had helped to steal your diamonds, and I'm afraid I locked the Cardinal up

"Oh, please hurry and let the poor thing out!" Miss Harriet pleaded when she fully realized the situation. But Richard for once determined to put pleasure even before so plain a duty as releasing an innocent prisoner.

"No," he whispered; "I want the promise of another prisoner first-a prisoner for life-for all time-and one who will never wish to get away. I love you," he pleaded, "with all my strength and with all my soul. Dear-

est; will you be my prisoner?" She checked his extended hands and asked, with a mischlevous smile: "Will-will you lock me up in the

"If you need it," he answered audaclously. "But at other times I'll lock you in my heart. Darling, will you

Again he came toward her, and this time he would not be denied. "Yes," murmured Harriet faintly.

And Richard the Brazen came into

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