

Every Man For Himself

By HOPKINS MOORHOUSE

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CHAPTER IV.—(Cont'd.)

The office of Blatchford Ferguson, barrister, etc., in the Broker's Bank Building, was laid out along somewhat unconventional lines. Of course the public entrance from the corridor gave admission to an outer office where two or three stenographers operated their typewriters under the eye of a law student, while just inside the railing of the entranceway sat a pompous office boy who occupied himself variously with an old-fashioned letter-press alongside the vault, with sharpening lead pencils, chewing gum and guarding the gate in the railing. But the partitions which enclosed this general office were built solid from floor to ceiling and the only sign of an inner presence was a door directly behind the youthful sentry, the ground glass of which bore the single word, "Secretary," in neat gold and black lettering.

The Secretary's office had a private entrance from the public corridor of the building and an inside door, lettered "Loans and Investments." On through this office was still another door, inscribed "Insurance Department," while beyond this second sanctum was a third door which led into the sanctum sanctorum with its unexpected exit upon a narrow black hallway and a dusty flight of stairs by which it was possible without undue publicity to reach the street or, rather, the back lane where carters made deliveries.

At times this carefully planned office arrangement was found to be highly convenient, no less by the confidential Mr. Ferguson than by certain of his clients. For although Blatchford Ferguson, barrister, etc., really could—and did—go barristering about the courts quite legitimately, he also carried on a substantial business in et ceteras. Thus, he could talk to an insurance prospect in a private office provided with insurance files and hung with insurance company calendars; or he could talk to a possible investor in a private office which had just the right financial atmosphere to foster confidence. Buying, selling, borrowing, lending, advising—nothing that could be "farmed out" on a split commission was beneath the notice of Blatch Ferguson, who would have negotiated a deal for a carload of Russian whiskers could he have found a responsible master barber to make the contract with a mattress factory which had the price.

One day a student who presided over the outer office, Kendrick was conscious that the office boy and the stenographers behind him were enjoying the mild sensation which his black eye inspired. Even Conway was grinning like an idiotic cat from Cheshire. The two had known each other, somewhat casually, at the university.

"I bumped into the parallel bars during a game of volley ball at the gym the other night," he explained gravely. "Is Ferguson in?"

Conway told him to walk right through. Miss Williams would take in his card. Thus it came about that Phil, unescorted, passed through the gate in the railing and on through the door to the secretary's office. As he closed this door behind him he paused for a moment in some uncertainty at finding the secretary's office deserted. Her hat and coat were hanging in place, however, and a half finished letter was in her typewriter; so he ventured through to the open doorway beyond, thinking she might have stepped into the adjoining office.

She had. She had gone right through it and through the second office of the suite also. The young lady was visible through the vista of open doorways and she was so absorbed in her own activities that she was quite oblivious of his presence. For she was kneeling with her ear to the key-hole of the farthest door of all, the one which led into the sanctum sanctorum of her employer, and there was no doubt whatever that she was listening with all her might.

Not a little astonished, Kendrick watched her. Then at his slight cough the girl straightened quickly and stared at him with widened eyes. In answer to his beckoning finger she came towards him slowly, her color mounting swiftly. When she had shut the last door behind her she faced him with an air of defiance.

Kendrick gazed at her in speechless admiration of the picture she made as she stood there, symmetrical figure gracefully erect, her head held high with its elaborate coiffure of brown hair, her dark blue eyes flashing resentment. The creamy column of her well shaped neck, the firm chin, the almost classic perfection of her features, the rich red of her cheeks—wherever did Ferguson go for his secretaries? She was plainly dressed in some dark material with a white collar and cuffs; but the sensible office dress served only to heighten the pleasing effect. There was only one jarring note—the fact that she was chewing gum, chewing it rapidly as if to relieve nervous tension.

"Well! Hope you'll know me next time you see me! Get it off your chest please! Whatcha goin' to do about it?"

Kendrick smiled slowly at the incongruity of the speech, even while thankful that her voice at least was not in harsh discord with her appearance, but well modulated.

"I beg your pardon," he apologized, realizing all at once that he had been guilty of staring somewhat longer than was warranted even by the unusual circumstances. "I am very short-sighted and there are times when I cannot distinguish objects at a greater distance than a very few feet. This morning my eyes are exceptionally bad."

She glanced at him quickly as if searching for indications of mockery which were lacking in the courteous tones of his voice.

"If you will be good enough to take in my card—?" he suggested, extending it.

She hesitated, then laid down her notebook and accepted the card without speaking. Ferguson coming to meet him at the door with extended hand, stopped short and stared.

"It's a peach, Phil! I must admit it's a peach!"

"A Lombard plum, you mean, Blatch. How'd I get it? Why, you see, I had the misfortune to step on a wayward banana skin— Oh, well, if you really must know, I tried to help an old lady pick up some bundles she'd dropped and she hit me with her umbrella, thinking I was going to grab them and run."

"Come right in. Come right in," chuckled Ferguson. "Here, have a cigar?"

"Got to make another call and it's nearly noon now. Would you mind if I leave the door open? The smoke's pretty thick."

"Hit you with an umbrella, eh?" chortled the lawyer with jovial skepticism as he tilted back in his swivel chair. "Deduction: It had a knob on the end of it! Sentence: Thirty days in the woods!" and Mr. Ferguson stroked his nose while he permitted his shoulders to shake in appreciation of his own pleasantry. Mr. Ferguson's nose was fleshy and its color was red.

"On my way there now—going fishing down the French River with an old schoolmate," grinned Phil. "Say, there was a meeting over at my uncle's on the Island last night, Blatch," he added briskly. "I believe you were there. Will you tell me what took place?"

Ferguson sat up. He ran his fingers over his head in a habitual gesture which long since had worn a bald streak along the top. He leaned back again in his chair, the tips of his fingers pressed together, and for a moment scowled thoughtfully at the wall.

"Your getting into deep water, boy," he warned at last, slowly. "I don't know where the mischief you got that information; but I'll have to refer you to the Chief himself for your answer. Why, what do you want to know for?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, except—it was very foggy, you remember?—a pretty good night for concealment, if anybody happened to be interested in spying on you people over there. You know more about that than I do."

Mr. Ferguson played a good game of poker; he prided himself upon his self-control. But the seriousness of his manner indicated that he was startled.

"Just what do you mean by that,

Phil? You've come here to tell me something. What is it?"

So Kendrick told him, omitting nothing except the fact that the girl had dared him to kiss her, and that when he had done so he had gone in for an involuntary swim.

"And you let that woman go home alone at that hour of the morning? You are neglectful both of your opportunities and your etiquette!" but although the lawyer's tone was light he was very serious as he pursed his lips and scowled.

"Don't go blaming me, Blatch. As soon as I helped her ashore she ran off and the fog was so thick you couldn't see anybody within a couple of feet of you. I tried my best to find out who she was; but she ducked. Besides, how was I to know the thing mattered? I didn't know Uncle Milt was in town even—not at the time."

"I didn't say it mattered, Phil," said Ferguson hastily. He laughed at the idea. "Whatever put it into your head to think this—er—lady was spying on an ordinary business meeting? Supposing she was—why, what earthly good would it do her?"

"Search me, Blatch. Thought I'd better tell you about it anyway."

"Quite right, of course. Hm—just so. She got away without leaving a single clue, eh? Not that it matters in the least, but— You did right in reporting it. Thanks."

"Would you mind telling me if you had anybody in the office here with you just before I came in? Or were you using the telephone?"

"Why," hesitated Ferguson in some surprise, "I was called on the 'phone by an old newspaper acquaintance—yes. Perhaps you know him—Hughy Podmore? He got a job recently as President Wade's private secretary—Canadian Lake Shores Railway. We used to work on the same paper long ago. Why?"

"Oh, nothing—just my idle curiosity. Say, there's something you can do for me, like a good fellow, before I go. Give me a knock-down to the lady outside, will you? Didn't know you owned a peach orchard, Blatch. Who is she?"

Ferguson chuckled as he pressed a button.

"Name's Margaret Williams. My regular stenographer was taken sick suddenly the other day and she sent around this friend of hers to substitute. She's a dandy good worker, too. But you're too late, my boy. She's leaving soon to marry a fellow at Buffalo—er—Miss Williams, allow me to present Mr. Philip Kendrick."

Her bow was very formal and as, at her employer's request, she escorted him to the private exit at her own end of the office, her manner was equally cold.

"I hope you bear me no ill will, Miss Williams," smiled Phil. "I assure you I have done nothing to merit it."

"That is—er—me to judge," she replied calmly. "I do not care to know you, Mr. Kendrick."

Phil turned quickly. It was the second time within twelve hours that a girl had told him that—in those very words, with that same disdainful tone. Why, if he were to shut his eyes he felt sure he could imagine it to be the very voice inflection used by his Fog Lady when delivering the same sentence of exile. Again he found himself guilty of staring.

"Have you ever seen a real, honest-to-goodness amulet, Miss Williams?" he asked eagerly, reaching into his pocket. "I'd like to show you mine before I go, if I may." He slowly unfolded the dollar bill and held out the hand-painted blouse pin, watching her closely.

"What a pretty pin!" she said in a flat, disinterested voice. She looked at it perfunctorily. "I know a man who used to carry a potato to chase rheumatism away. It was planted by a one-eyed, left-handed negro, born on the thirteenth of the month. I've heard of an elk's foot for pleurisy and a rabbit's foot for evil spirits; but a pin like that? It will lead you into danger instead of away from it."

"Not when it is pinned to a canoe cushion by a beautiful girl at the hour

of three o'clock in the morning in a dense fog," declared Kendrick significantly.

"That is very silly," said the haughty Miss Williams with a bored air as she handed it back to him and turned towards her typewriter. "Good-day, Mr. Kendrick. I really must get on with my work."

It was with an unreasonable feeling of disappointment that he bowed himself out. She had not blinked an eyelash! Who was the idiot who first started looking for needles in haystacks anyway? A fool's quest! Mumma! but wasn't he de trop with the ladies? Well, he would buy cigars with the dollar and make a present of the pin to Mrs. Parlyb, his uncle's estimable housekeeper.

But he did neither of these things. Instead, he was to continue the folly of keeping both souvenirs and the equal folly of looking at them from time to time—to see if they were safe.

(To be continued.)

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Cobbler's Son As Prophet.

More wonderful than any of his fairy tales is the story of Hans Andersen's own life.

He was born on April 2nd, 1805, in the old city of Odense, in Denmark. His father was a poor cobbler and his mother eventually drank herself to death.

For years Hans ran wild, without education, spending his time making dolls' dresses and reading Shakespeare. Then he went to Copenhagen.

He wrote a number of plays which were never performed, but a benefactor, realizing that he had talent, sent him to school. Hans knew nothing at the age of eighteen, but eventually he passed his examinations and went on a voyage to the East. His life was spent mostly in travelling and writing his wonderful tales.

He was something of a prophet, for he wrote:

Yes, in years to come we shall fly on the wings of steam high in the air, over the mighty ocean. The airplane comes; it is crowded with passengers, for the journey is quicker than by sea.

Hans knew many famous men, including the King of Denmark—father of Queen Alexandra—and he wrote about them in his books.

At the age of seventy the poor cobbler's son died, mourned by all: he was buried like a king.

Wreath for British Dead Faces Irish Delegates.

As they attend conferences in Downing Street every day the Irish peace delegates pass a cenotaph at which a new wreath of laurel with large red, white and blue streamers was laid recently. Attached to the wreath is a card bearing this inscription:

"Sacred to the memory of 568 officers and non-commissioned men of His Majesty's army, navy and police force who, having fought for King and country in the great war, have since been foully murdered by the King's enemies in Ireland."

Minard's Liniment used by Physicians.

Fallacies About the Strength of Insects

At intervals there appear accounts setting forth the prodigious strength of insects. Their muscular force is usually compared with their size by stating, for example, that a flea can leap so many times its own length and that an ant can drag so many times its own weight. Then it is said that man, if he were strong in the same proportion, could jump so many rods or lift so many tons. These comparisons, according to the eminent French investigator, Robida, are misleading, to say the least.

In his opinion, it is interesting to consider solely from a mechanical point of view these comparisons between the muscular strength of man and that of insects. Strictly from this standpoint they are by no means extraordinary, and are only one of the forms of what has been called "the conflict of squares and cubes." The law is well known—volumes decrease in more rapid ratio than surfaces.

The force that a muscle can exert depends on its section—that is, on a surface—although its capacity for doing work depends on its volume, as is logical. Here is the explanation of the astonishing strength of insects.

As an example, compare two muscles, that of a man and that of an insect, the latter 100 times shorter than the former. It is evident that the insect's muscle will be 1,000,000 times

lighter than the man's, while its section, and consequently the force it can exert, will be only 10,000 times less.

The conclusion is that since a man can lift 62 pounds, the insect will lift 10,000 times less, or 154 grains, and one gets the impressive spectacle of an insect lifting more than 100 times its weight. In fact, the smaller the insect is the more it will astonish us by an appearance of extraordinary strength.

But it is no longer the same if one examines the mechanical work effected. The muscle of the insect, supposed to be one-hundredth of a man's in linear dimensions, furnishes, when it contracts a force 10,000 times less than the human muscle, exerted through a space 100 times smaller.

Moreover, it seems (just as with machines where the smaller are proportionately weaker), as if the insect's muscle, instead of surpassing man's infinitely, is notably inferior to it in quality.

Take the flea's jump, for instance. By its muscular contraction it gives to its mass a movement capable of raising it twelve inches. Man can raise his own weight about five feet by leaping. For equal weight the human muscle thus furnishes five times more work than that of the flea in a single contraction.

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