

A MOVING STORY OF A MAN WITH A PAST

Second Chance

by HOLLOWAY HORN
Author of "George," "Two Men and Mary," Etc.,

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Mr. Hallett is Mr. Hallan's successor, Miss Wetherby.
"I'm certain we shall work well together," said Ferguson.
"You'll find us quite a happy family," Miss Wetherby said.

REAL JOB AT LAST

Mr. McKissoch was surprised to see Ferguson when he called, complete with bag, later in the morning.
"Pity!" he said. "You've started well."

"I've got one more order. A solicitor just round the corner.
There you are you see! You move among the type of customer we like. Still, it isn't much of a job for a man like you. Yes, this seems in order," he went on as he examined the order form.

Ferguson nodded: "Anyway, thank you, Mr. McKissoch."
At twelve-forty Ferguson was guilty of his first extravagance since he had left Mossford. He knew that at that hour Mary Donovan would be in the office and probably alone, and he put a trunk call through to Trevowe's.

"After rather less than the usual delay he heard her voice.
"Ye?" she said.
"This is John speaking. Ferguson. No, Ferguson Hallett speaking.
"John!" he heard her say.

"I've landed a wonderful job, my darling!"
"Oh, John! I'm delighted! I don't know what to say to you!"
"Say that you love me!"
"I do! I do! You know I do!"

CHAPTER XIII

FERGUSON, THE STAMP-BUYER

Ferguson was early at the auction room in New Bond Street. Mr. Dale had apparently not arrived and Ferguson watched with interest what was going on. There were between thirty and forty people present—mainly middle-aged and elderly men—and they

BLACKHEADS

Get two ounces of peroxide powder from your druggist. Sprinkle on a hot wet cloth and rub the face gently. Every blackhead will be dissolved. The one safe, sure and simple way to remove blackheads. Have a Hollywood complexion.

were examining the lots in the quiet, deft manner of experts.
He obtained a catalogue from the commissionaire, took a seat at the long table and was looking through a collection when Simon Dale came in. Several of the experts and dealers greeted him; he was obviously a person of importance in that odd little world where pieces of coloured paper sell for fantastic sums.

"Ah! You're here, Hallett," he said. "Good man. This is where I usually sit. You sit next to me."
"You see that mark? That is my valuation and what I'm prepared to pay for them."
"They're in code," Hallett, as he should now be called, pointed out. "Oh, yes. Wouldn't do if people knew what I was prepared to go to," he said with a smile.

"Quite," Hallett said.
"The code is simple," he said in a low tone. "You take my name SIMON DALE. S is 1, I is 2, and so on. See?" Hallett nodded.
"There are ten letters. For a nought I use an X. So NX—men 50—."
"Perfectly simple," said Hallett. "And these are your valuations?"

"Yes."
"You can leave the sale to me now if you wish," he said, quietly.
"That's just what I wanted to do. You don't pay at the end. We have an account here, of course. And the lots will be sent round to us in the morning."

"Then leave it to me. I'll report in Regent Square when the sale is over."
"Sure you can manage?"
"Yes."
"Then I'll introduce you to the auctioneer as my representative. Come on."

The auctioneer, a pleasant grey-haired little man, was pleased to meet Mr. Dale's representative.
"There's an important client coming in this afternoon," Simon Dale explained when he and Ferguson were alone again. "But I couldn't miss this sale. Of course, you'll note against each lot what you pay for it."

"Of course."
"Then... good hunting. See you later!"
And with that Simon Dale turned away, leaving Hallett to face his first auction as a professional.

Most of the collections and miscellaneous lots went for prices higher than those at which Simon Dale had valued them, but when the lots containing the better stamps came along it was a different matter.
Hallett watched the code carefully, otherwise he might—in the phrase of the auctioneer—have cut his fingers. Curious glances came his way, for, although Hallett was not aware of it, the representative of Simon Dale in a stamp auction was a person of importance. Out of the one hundred and ninety lots offered, thirty-two were knocked down to Simon Dale, and by the end of the sale Hallett had spent nearly five hundred pounds. He had carefully noted the prices he had paid and at the end of the sale made his way back to Regent Square.

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Children 5 years of age and under 12, when accompanied by guardian, HALF FARE. Tickets good in coaches only. No Baggage Checked. For fares, departure times and further information apply to local agent

Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway The Nipissing Central Railway Company

shop is open until seven. You can get on with the job now. These are approval books and the price above each stamp is its catalogue value; the number, the number in the catalogue. There's the catalogue—the bible of the trade. You have to check the prices, see? If you are satisfied tick the price; if you aren't certain, leave it. I'll look through them when you've done."

"I remember the catalogue. I shall soon drop into the watermarks and perforations again."
"Good! Then go ahead."
The work was simple. It had been made out by one of the girls in an adjoining office and Ferguson found very few mistakes. Simon Dale looked in a little after six.

"Well?" he said from the doorway. "One or two slips. Very few."
"Um... usually she doesn't make any."

"The mistakes may be mine."
"No. That valuation is wrong," Dale said.
By the end of the week Hallett was feeling his feet. He had attended several sales and his accurate, competent work evidently pleased Simon Dale. One important customer—a specialist in South Australian stamps—was brought into his office by Mr. Dale: "Mr. Hallett will look after you," he said.

The customer spent two hours going through the South Australian stock books, but his bill at the end of it was over a hundred pounds.

BACK IN MOSSFORD

On the Friday morning, on his way to the office, Hallett had a bit of luck. He passed a little junk shop in Percy Street the window of which was apparently filled with rubbish. Among a pile of books, however, he noticed a small buff-coloured Lullier album and bought it from the junk dealer for the price he was asked—a shilling.
He glanced at it as he strolled along. It was a stuck-down collection and he already knew enough about the value of the ware in which he worked to appreciate that he had a find. There were no exceptional rarities in the album, but it contained, amidst a lot of damaged copies, a few good specimens.

"I picked this up for a bob this morning, sir," he told Simon Dale.
Dale laughed as he glanced through the book.
"Who do you want for it?"
"A bob. I bought it for the firm."
"Nonsense! It's worth a fiver. Hand it over to Miss Dalrymple. She'll have the decent copies out in no time. Always keep your eyes open."

"I was on my way to the office when I picked it up."
"A fiver, neither more nor less, is what I shall pay for it. We'll make our profit on it at that price."

"Very good, I hope I haven't done too badly this week, Mr. Dale?"
"Not too badly. I'm quite satisfied—so far—if you are."

"I certainly am."

"That chap Buckland I brought up to you yesterday afternoon spoke very nicely about you, Hallett."

"I'm pleased."

"Lord Beccles is coming in this afternoon. His weakness is Trinidad. Care to take him on?"
"Yes."

"Good. I'll do the Fleet Street sale. I dislike my Lord of Beccles. But he's a good customer. Handle him gently."

Simon Dale returned in the late afternoon. "How did you get on?" he asked.
"Fine. I liked him very much. Sold him quite a lot of early Granada as well."

The train left Euston the next morning at nine-thirty and as it rolled out of the dismal terminus Hallett lit his pipe with a feeling of thankfulness. A week before, only the indomitable courage of the girl who would be waiting for him on Mossford platform had kept him from depression, but that morning, as he looked out on the suburban houses flying past, he felt able to face the future with confidence.

Berkhamsted—it was incredible that ten days ago he had been vainly attempting to sell books to its unresponsive citizens.
Mary Donovan was waiting on the platform when the train stopped in Mossford.

Impossible not to compare this with the last time he had come to the town. Then he had been alone as he had turned into the London Road, but this morning it was as if he had come home. They took a trolley bus to her road and they were there before he had told her all the news.

"I told you!" she said several times. "I'm not in the least surprised."
"Of course! You think it extraordinary? Stamps... bits of paper..."

"What else is a bank note?" she asked. "I wish I knew more about them. And I think Simon Dale seems an absolute dear!"

Mrs. Donovan was quite friendly when he got there, but it was clear that she welcomed him because she had to. But by the time he and Mary left to go to Manor Street, however, her reserve was not so evident.

"She's as good as gold, really," Mary assured him. "She'll come right round. She always does."

But at Number Five, Mrs. Gaddesden had no reserve. There was no mistaking the warmth of her welcome.

They had tea in his old room and immediately after the meal Mrs. Gaddesden remembered a promise to call on a friend just down the road and hoped they wouldn't mind.

"I needn't be away more than an hour," she told them.
It was then nearly five. "John's train goes at seven-fifteen. Auntie. We must leave here at a quarter to seven. You must be back by then, any way."

(To be Continued)

Tobacco Business Helps Prosperity

Co-operation and Good Will Between Growers, Manufacturers and Others Concerned Aiding Industry.

Simcoe, Ont., November 23.—With the final curtain rung down on the 1937 tobacco market, growers of Canada's newest large agricultural crop were able to reckon their profits in excess of \$100 per acre.

This year's market, which saw 56 million pounds of flue-cured tobacco snapped up by buyers in less than ten days, realized in excess of fifteen million dollars for the 1,700 producers who this spring planted 50,500 acres to the crop. Available figures show that tobacco produced a return of approximately \$300 per acre.

Chief problem until 1934 was marketing. Today Ontario's flue-cured tobacco growers belong to a marketing association which rigidly controls price and acreage. Each year, with the co-operation of the prospective buyers of the crop, the tobacco production is "budgeted" and the planting is done purely on a basis of the available market for that year's crop, taking into consideration, of course, growing export prospects. The growers who comprise the association are allotted certain acreages to plant to tobacco.

When the crop is harvested, representatives of growers and buyers—all joint members of the marketing association—meet and agree on an average minimum price for the crop. In 1936, for instance, the average minimum was set at 25 cents per pound, but the price actually paid was 29 cents. This year the average minimum was 24½ cents and the price paid will probably exceed 27 cents.

With the co-operation of the farmer and the buyer, a crop of 56 million pounds—more than twice the 1936 production—was moved this year at a price which sets a new high record for returns.

The tobacco industry has proved a fruitful field for labour agitators. During the harvest season in August an incident "strike" was halted when farmers succeeded in obtaining university students and unemployed youths and men from nearby cities who were willing to work for three dollars and more per day. When the market opened, another group of agitators succeeded in organizing 200 of the 1,700 land-owners and temporarily delaying the market, but the agitation collapsed for lack of support among the representative section of the industry.

Today the tobacco industry in Canada is unique on the North American continent.



It is in that growers and buyers budget the annual production months ahead of time, amicably agree upon a fixed price which permits a substantial profit for all branches, and work hand in hand for future expansion.

If You Like Books

(By A. H.)

In my collection of odd poems, that have been gathered from here and there, I stumbled upon one that was once given to me by a school chum. It is a Chinese poem, and it is very quaint and charming, so that it is no wonder that the poem was described, in a note which accompanied it, as being "just too sweet." Quoting:

Chiang Nan (By T'sen T'sen)

Last night within my chamber's gloom, A vague light breath of spring Came wandering and whispering, And bade my soul take wing.

A hundred moonlit miles away, The Chiang crept to sea, O, keeper of my heart, I came By Chiang's ford to thee.

Oh, Chiang Nan's a hundred miles Yet in a moment's space,

I've flown away to Chiang Nan, And touched a dreaming face.

Another little poem, more of a thought than anything else, is worth keeping in mind:

A Little Skylight (By F. J. Earl) When I have drained My own wee cup, I'll criticize Those high up.

The Kicker

(From an Exchange)

I hate to be a kicker, I always long for peace, But the wheel that does the squeaking is the one that gets the grease.

It's nice to be a peaceful soul, and not too hard to please, But the dog that's always scratching is the one that has the fleas. The art of soft soap spreading is a thing that palls and stales, But the guy who wields the hammer is the guy who drives the nails.

Let us not put any notions that are harmful in your head, But the baby that gets yelling is the baby that keeps fed.

Brockville Recorder and Times:—If every bachelor in Canada, between the ages of 20 and 35, made up his mind to marry but insisted that he would not enter into connubial bliss unless the young lady was a Canadian, or at least a resident of Canada, and providing also that all the young ladies in Canada between the same ages were willing, there would not be enough brides to go around.



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