The Long Arm of Boss Tank

By P. C. Macfarlane

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"I will not pay you a cent for it—not a cent," said Holman, defiantly.

"You'll pay for it or you won't get it," exclaimed Tank, sententiously. "If you don't know who's runnin' this town, darn you, I'll learn you."

Holman's face flushed. "Then you can begin your instructions," he snapped, gaining the door with a quick stride. An instant later it slammed behind him, leaving Daniel Tank, boss, gross of body and flabby faced, sitting alone in the dingy private office over the cigar store of Heck & Heck, from which throne-room he ruled the city like an Oriental despot. The boss chewed the stump of his unlighted cigar, meditatively, for a moment carrying in his mind the picture of his recent visitor, William A. Holman, warehouseman and teaming contractor, tall, dark-visaged and somber-eyed, a stubborn, slow-learning type of man, and wondered — wondered that he should hope to get a spur track permit through the council, while refusing to leave in the boss's hand the price current for such a privilege.

The next morning Mickie Halloran hurried into the presence of his master.

"What d'y' think?" he sputtered, excitedly; "Bill Holman's gone ahead and slapped down that spur track to his new warehouse site without a permit!"

"He has?" roared Tank, swinging about in his great office chair, which was built to cradle a rhinoceros.

"That's what he done!" piped the auburn stubbled lieutenant, a look of amazement and a sense of outraged dignities mingling on his freckled face.

"Well, I be damned!" exclaimed the boss, rising abruptly to his feet. "I guess I got to get that fellow Holman, and get him good. I thought he was lookin' for trouble when he come in here, yesterday."

He took a few heavy strides across the room and back to his desk.

"Halloran," he ordered, "get me a list of the people that's warehousin' with Holman; and give me a string of his biggest teamin' customers. Quick, now, you understand! And say! Send for Dickie Dugan, too."

Dickie was the son of Policeman Dugan. He was an overgrown wharf-rat, or an undersized hoodlum, whichever you like, and headed a gang of little devils who hung about the streets and wharves, and who in the course of their enterprise found occasional need for a friend at "Police Court." Tank had more than once been that friend, and could command Dickie's allegiance to the last stubby red hair in his head.

Dickie came in fifteen minutes, whistling, his hat on one side, his cigarette in the opposite corner of his lower lip to balance off, and with mingling pride and terror in his heart. He did not know whether the boss's summons boded weal or woe.

"Dickie," said Tank, "do you know Bill Holman's wagons when you see 'em?"

"Do I know me mudder's old shoes when I meet 'em in de garret?" countered Dickie, flippantly.

"Then buy a half barrel of monkey-wrenches and see if we can't make some of Holman's wagons lose a wheel or two," commanded Tank, abruptly.

Dickie's face changed swiftly.

"Am I awake?" he gasped, peering earnestly into the face of the boss.

"You better be—and git to work, quick," snapped the boss.

The light of pure joy blazed on the face of Dickie Dugan. With a gleeful chuckle he dashed for the door.

This sort of campaign, of course, could not be kept up for long. Its purpose was to madden, as banderillas in the shoulders of a bull; to keep his man busy with small irritations while the boss instituted a campaign of real proportions; and it served its purpose admirably.

Within an hour a wheel fell from a Holman truck at the corner of Jackson and Drumm. It was a most unaccountable accident. The truck was heavily loaded with soap in cases and lurched on to the street-car track, resulting in a collision and all manner of trouble. Fifteen minutes later, a wheel rolled calmly off a Holman coal cart and went rumbling down the water front for half a block; meantime a ton of coal and a cart with broken thills were demanding attention of the driver and blocking the line of carts behind. Just at noon, a four-horse team of Holman's lost both hind wheels on the H Street grade. A truck at Hill and Broadway, that bore the Holman name, was also in difficulties. Before night Mr. Holman was storming Police Headquarters. He could not keep wheels on his wagons. The street urchins had taken some kind of grudge against him and were demoralizing his teaming business. He was very angry.

"I am surprised," said the chief of police soothingly. "I'll have the day watch warned in the morning."

But by noon of the morrow Mr. Holman was at Police Station again. He was frantic with rage. There was an organized movement to keep him from doing business. It must be some scheme of his competitors.

The chief did not know, but had his suspicions. He slipped into the inner office and telephoned to Daniel Tank.

"He's got a fine spur track up to his warehouse. What does he need of teams?" was the answer that came back.

Diplomatically, the chief of police conveyed his suggestion to Mr. Holman. He caught on like cockle-burs in September, and straightway went off to pour the tale of his outraged feelings into the ear of the city editor of the *Telegram*. The *Telegram* told it to the people next day, with suitable editorial allusion; except that the morning *Telegram* was very late as to its city edition, because the Holman trucks that hauled the paper rolls by night from the cars could not keep their wheels on, and the stock ran out just as the country edition was off the press.

The editor of the *Telegram* was now mad on his own account. He presumed to call up Mr. Tank about it.

"Too bad, Holman is such an unreliable sort of fellow," said Tank, soothingly. "Why don't you try another truckman?" Other customers of Holman, who experienced similar embarrassment, had this same thought, and presently his horses were standing in stable eating their heads off, and it mattered little whether the wheels were on or off the trucks, since there was nothing to haul in them.

That day Mr. Tank took occasion to run by Mr. Holman's warehouse on his way to luncheon. The spur track was there and a car-load of packing-house products was being unloaded. Mr. Tank noticed the brand on the boxes. It carried the name of a contractor who furnished supplies of many kinds to the city and county institutions to the amount of thousands of dollars monthly. That afternoon this contractor found an immense bill of his for supplies held up in the auditor's office. A committee from the common council was investigating the character of supplies furnished and had requested that the bill be not passed to voucher for the present. Also there were no more orders for the contractor pending this investigation, which, as the city government moves slowly on occasion, might take years. The contractor bestirred himself with council committees, with almhouse superintendents, and finally with Mr. Daniel Tank, himself.

"Warehousin' with Holman, ain't you?" queried Mr. Tank.

"Yes," answered the contractor.

"Well," observed Mr. Tank, lowering his left eyelid, noticeably, "Bill Holman ain't very popular with me just now."

The contractor sat up abruptly, for an instant, while he exchanged a glance, shrewd and conceiving, with the one open eye of Daniel Tank.

His lips pursed themselves and emitted a long, low whistle; then he leaped for the door.

That afternoon, long lines of trucks, and they were not of the Holman kind, for Dickie Dugan's gang was still abroad in the land, were backed up at the Holman warehouse doors and this broker's products were seeking other lodgment.

The man who was putting in the new fire-alarm system for the city was also in trouble. He couldn't seem to get information desired. Men cold-shouldered him and misled him and grouched him in a thousand ways. He was a man of experience with municipal governments, and after a few days, threw up his hands high and asked the chairman of the fire board to dinner.

The commissioner began with a Martini, and aided and abetted and encouraged by his host, ate and drank his way through the generous bill of fare to a state of comfortable amiability. The fire-alarm man saw that a well-filled glass of some ingratiating spirit was ever at his elbow. With the coffee and cigars came the moment for which he was waiting.

"Shay," said the commissioner struggling to balance the demi-tasse before his lips, "I want to wise you up a little."

"Yes?" said the fire-alarm man, blowing smoke high to conceal his eager expectancy, "yes? Go ahead."

"You got a lot of stuff in Holman's warehouse, ain't you—copper wire, boxes, insulators, switches and all that?"

"Yes," assented the man. "Why?"

"Well, Bill Holman ain't *right* with the administration, d' y' see?"

The fire-alarm man saw, and as soon as he could bring the dinner decently to a close he was earnestly seeking storage for some scores of tons of copper wire and other accessories.

The mysterious boycott ran everywhere, even into the banks. Men who did business with Holman began to have trouble with their accommodations at the leading financial institutions of the city—institutions so eminent and respectable that it seemed impossible that a vulgar, club-fisted boss, who, yesterday, was bouncer in a saloon and to-day by the favor of chance, ruled the city like a czar to be cast down and go the way of his kind to-morrow, could have any commerce with them, let alone influencing their treatment of faithful customers of long standing and unquestioned integrity.

There was the case of Jones & Company, dealers in hides and wool. They were doing an immense business and Holman had their teaming contracts. They were buying freely and holding, on some tips regarding the new tariff bill, and had stretched themselves out to the limit, and still they wanted accommodations. All at once there seemed not to be anywhere such a thing as accommodation. Not only was there no money for them, but gently and firmly they were requested to reduce the amount of their indebtedness. Jones was in so far he went white at the thought of curtailed credit. He sat down in the office of Merton, president of the Metropolitan, and sought to know who was plotting against him. Mr. Merton was affable, but inscrutable.

"There is Mr. Vining, now," he said suavely. "He is chairman of our loan committee. You might talk with him."

Mr. Vining was diplomatic, but also informing.

"You have a contract with Holman, who does your teaming, haven't you, Mr. Jones?"

"Yes."

"Well," said Mr. Vining, choosing his words carefully, "there are powerful interests connected with this bank, interests which I need not name, but which we are bound to respect, who are opposed to Mr. Holman, very much opposed, and are unwilling to see the bank's capital used in any business that makes traffic for him. Do you see?"

"Some spite game, is it?" snapped Mr. Jones, with a gasp of relief, when he understood that his own credit was only arbitrarily impaired.

"I shouldn't call it that," said Mr. Vining.

"Well, by jingo, I do!" declared Mr. Jones, "and I'll just stand by him. He's always done our business in a satisfactory way. I'll not see him brow-beaten over my shoulders. I'll raise my loan elsewhere. A man goes first to his own bank, of course."

And Mr. Jones waltzed out with something approaching as near to asperity of manner as that very good-hearted gentleman could accomplish.

But he was back the next day.

"By the way," said Mr. Vining, seizing the first speech, "you are not to forget, Mr. Jones, that we are depending on you to reduce your indebtedness by taking up a part of those notes which come up for renewal next week."

Since Mr. Vining knew from private advices of his own the occasion of Mr. Jones's return to him, this speech was like an unwrung blanket in its effect upon the spirits of his visitor.

"But," said Mr. Jones, "I can't do it, Vining. I have to have more money to put through my deals. I've been to every house in town. They are cold-shouldering me. There's lots of money and I know it. But they all say, 'Not just now, Mr. Jones. We can only take care of our own customers.' So that runs me back to you, and confound it, Vining, you've got to take care of me. You have no right to destroy my credit by refusing my legitimate loans when I have been banking with you for twenty years."

"You are destroying your own credit, Mr. Jones, as I have explained to you already."

"How? Oh! You mean Holman? Why, confound it, Vining! How can I do that?—break off with him, I mean. Why, we're neighbors. We belong to the same clubs. Our daughters are in society together. Besides, I don't want to turn on him, just now. He tells me he's in some kind of trouble with the city authorities about a spur track or something to one of his warehouses. That unscrupulous grafter, Dan Tank, is after him and making all sorts of trouble for him. I wouldn't want to turn against him, now."

"Of course not," said Mr. Vining, pushing a button. His jaws had snapped as he spoke with the dry, juiceless click of a steel trap. His words were reassuring, but the manner of them was not.

"Bring me the statement of our bills receivable from Jones & Company," he said to the clerk who answered his ring.

The perspiration started on Mr. Jones's brow. His eyes, too, bulged in their sockets.

"Really, Mr. Vining!" he gasped.

"Really, Mr. Jones," observed Mr. Vining.

"Do you mean that I've got to break my teaming contracts with W. A. Holman, an old friend, who has done our hauling for twenty years, before I can get my notes renewed and secure the additional reasonable credit that I require?"

"It would simplify matters, I think, if you should do that," Mr. Vining said, absently, while scanning a financial review.

"Can it be possible that Dan Tank can use this bank and use me to punish a man of the standing in this community of William A. Holman?" asked Mr. Jones, with something of amazement and something of resignation in his voice.

"Daniel Tank use this bank?" exclaimed Mr. Vining in great surprise and a trace of indignation. "Absurd! As I have explained to you, powerful interests among our stockholders, whom we are bound to respect, feel that Mr. Holman has not treated them right; perhaps, I might say, he is a competitor of them in an unfair way to a certain extent, and they are exceedingly anxious that none of their capital be used even remotely to develop the business of a competitor. That looks reasonable, doesn't it?"

"Yes, I must say it does," confessed Mr. Jones. "But I hate it, all the same."

"So do I," said Mr. Vining. And fervently he spoke the truth.

"Well, I'll do it," said Mr. Jones, with a fine show of resignation and latent resolution, "but I'll explain all about it to Billie Holman, just the same, and tell him it's hard lines for me to do it, but everybody's got to take their medicine these times, I guess."

"That is the philosophical way to look at it," said Mr. Vining.

On top of this a mortgage of Holman's came due. It was for fifty thousand dollars and represented the last payment on the purchase price of the coal yards and the two red star warehouses that thrifty gentleman had acquired three years before. That Holman could meet it in his present condition seemed utterly impossible. Tank had watched the days creep by with hungry eyes. His bank, the Traders, had bought the mortgage. There would be no grace for the mortgagor. The upper and the nether millstones were being properly burred for Holman.

(To be continued)

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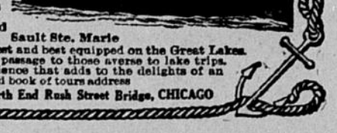

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VINCENNES.

H. C. Chronicle is building a three room addition to his house.

The meadows and small grain are going to be very light this year on account of continued dry weather.

Harry Goon and George McCarthy were out driving last Sunday afternoon.

Mrs. N. L. Cruze was a Keokuk caller yesterday.

Otto Youngreen of Oak Grove has been baleing hay in the neighborhood recently.

Dr. J. R. Wedel of Keokuk, passed through our town yesterday in his new automobile.

D. J. Teel was in Keokuk yesterday.

Frank Storms purchased a new gasoline engine from C. G. Freeman yesterday.

John Nye is working on the section this week.

Jas. McCarty was a Farmington caller yesterday.

Barrel Gong.

As a change from the Oriental gong and the one composed of pipes there is the barrel gong. This is made of brass in the form of a small barrel, and when struck with the felt hammer emits a deep, rich sound, much like a bell. Each end is tuned to a different pitch, while a round disk of brass set in the top sends forth still another sound.

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New South Wales, Australia, makes state loans to settlers at from 4½ to 5 per cent. interest, repayable by yearly instalments spread over not longer than thirty-one years. No loan is larger than £2,000.

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FRATERNAL CARDS

MASONIC.

Hall, corner Fourth and Main Eagle lodge, No. 12—Holds its regular meeting the first Tuesday evening of each month.

Hardin Lodge No. 29.—Holds its regular monthly meeting the second Monday evening of each month.

INDEPENDENT ORDER OF ODD FELLOWS.

Hall Seventh and Main Streets.

Keokuk Lodge, No. 13, meets regularly Monday evening at 7:30 o'clock. Geo. Hardin, N. G.; Otto Anschutz, Recording Secretary.

Puckechetuck Lodge No. 43, meets every Friday evening at 8 o'clock. L. E. Wittich, N. G.; Geo. W. Immegart, Permanent Secretary.

Herman Lodge No. 116, (German), meets regularly every Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. A. H. Linnenburger, N. G.; Albert Kiefer, Rec. Sec.

Puckechtuck Encampment, No. 7, meets first and third Thursday evenings of each month. Wm. C. Kumme., Scribe.

A. O. U. W.

Keokuk Lodge, No. 256—Meets every Thursday night at 7:30 o'clock at hall over Keokuk Savings bank, corner Fifth and Main streets. Visiting brethren cordially invited. Thos W. Lester, M. W.; A. E. Moore, recorder.

K. of P.

Morning Star Lodge, No. 5—Meets Fifth and Blondeau, K. of P. building Tuesday at 7:30 p. m. C. C. Koept, Chancellor Commander; J. A. Burgess K. of R. and S. Visiting Knights fraternally invited.

KNIGHTS AND LADIES OF SECURITY, KEOKUK COUNCIL, No. 1039. Meets the first and third Monday of each month, at A. O. U. W. hall at 8 o'clock. O. W Rowe, president; Ernest Best, Financier; Mayme C. Schenk Secretary.

MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA

Gibbons' Hall.

Keokuk Camp, No. 622—Meets every Wednesday evening at 7:30 p. m. Our latch string is out to neighbors. C. B. Lake, V. C.; J. A. Pollard, Clerk.

B. P. O. ELKS.

Keokuk Lodge, No. 106—Meets first and third Thursday nights at Elks hall, Gibbons opera house block, Sixth and Main streets. Club rooms open daily. Visiting brethren cordially invited. W. H. Reimbold, E. R.; Leroy J. Wolf, Secretary.

FRATERNAL ORDER OF EAGLES.

Keokuk Aerie, No. 683—Meets first and third Wednesday of each month at Eagle's hall, 523 Main. Visiting brothers cordially invited. Geo. J. D. Salzer, W. President; C. A. Noakes, secretary.

W. O. W.

Gate City Camp No. 81, Woodmen of the World, meets every second and fourth Tuesday, at Hawkes' hall, corner Eighth and Main strets. C. C. Sovern, C. C.; E. E. Hawkes, clerk.

ORDER OF OWLS.

Regular meeting of the Order of Owls the first and third Tuesdays of each month at their hall in the Hubinger building, 25 North Sixth street. Visiting Owls are cordially invited. F. M. Ballinger, worthy president; Ed. W. Kiser, secretary.

Statement.

The Mississippi River Power company wishes to announce to those interested that it has completed its final and revised surveys determining definitely the river slopes that will result from the construction and operation of the Keokuk dam.

It can be stated that there will be no new condition created above Fort Madison in so far as high water is concerned, as in times of high water the gates in the dam will be lowered to a sufficient extent to maintain the same level of water at the dam and in the entire lake it creates, as in low water, namely elevation 525.00 above sea level, Memphis datum.

The maintenance of this level of 525.00 during periods of normal or low water, will have the effect of keeping permanently a higher level of water during periods of low water over the territory north of Ft. Madison than would exist if the dam were not in existence. This result will be noticeable in the effect it has upon the low water stage only and the effect will extend as far north as eighteen miles above Burlington.

In other words, a new stage of low water will be created for the territory north of Ft. Madison, while the high water will produce the same effect and extend over the same area that it has heretofore extended prior to the construction of the dam, when a like volume of water was passing down the river.

The new permanent low water stage will be approximately 16 feet on the Ft. Madison gauge and 7-3.10 feet on the Burlington gauge.

The company has already settled with practically all of the property owners below Ft. Madison. These properties will have a new high water level.

It is now ready to deal with the owners of the property which will be overflowed for a greater length of time than at present, and anticipates no difficulty in doing so if met in the same spirit of fairness from land owners as it has been uniformly met with up to this time.

In this connection the power company realizes that in some cases the maintaining of the high level during the low water season will not damage abutting property. In other cases the damage will be small and in still other cases there will be real damage which the power company must compensate.

PROFESSIONAL CARDS.

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