

"There!" Tom intercepted, laughing. "I guess that will hold you for a little while." Turning to Blanchard he offered apologetically, "Jack is the most impossible fellow on earth; one never knows just what to expect—"

"Or when to expect it, hey!" Harrington interrupted. "But you see, Blanchard, I've been talking money so incessantly to-day, the habit has sort of grown on me; it just will come out in spite of the devil."

"Well, I sincerely trust your words will be productive," Blanchard said, arising to depart. Then with a knowing glance at Tom he continued, "and I assure you of my keen interest in the welfare of this concern."

"The younger men expressed their hearty thanks for his kind wishes and stood in silence until he had closed the door behind him. Tom was the first to speak."

"Well! you didn't make it?" he ventured.

"I did not—and I'm just beginning to understand why so many men have gone down to defeat at the hands of this 'Iron Man,' as you call him," he said, bitterly. "They have all fought alone—not man to man, but against the herd of frightened creatures who dare not oppose their leader. Why! My very name strikes terror to their inmost soul. Caldwell, millionaire though he is, trembled at the thought of such a thing; even after I had convinced him victory must follow, he refused. I tell you this is incredulous, unbelievable, even suspicious. I pleaded—I implored, but he would not budge an inch, and—well, I lost my patience, my temper as well, and he ordered me out."

"Despite the lamentable situation Tom roared. "In these big United States do you think there is capital free from the contamination you suggest?" he asked.

"I doubt it seriously, unless it lies buried somewhere between the Rockies and the Pacific Ocean."

"Let us hope it is as bad as that. I'm going to see what I can do."

"When alone, Harrington relaxed and sank into a chair, overcome by a strange feeling that convulsed his massive frame. Fear was unknown to him; nor had he ever experienced the crushing bitterness of defeat, and if his strength waned now, it was not because of this. What a little thing was his fortune compared to the loss of the girl he loved. He was thinking of her expressions of confidence in him, her sweet words of courage, when he left her that day with the assurance that he would win. Win! The word ridiculed him and he laughed bitterly. Win! when even in the first hour of his career he must be branded a failure. He fancied seeing her fade out of his life altogether, and his hands clasped tighter the arms of his chair. "My God!" he gasped. "How can I bear it? He thought of her father, who had deceived him into the whirl of finance, only to pounce upon and send him skirting with its offal. At that minute the door opened and "The Iron Man" walked in.

"Harrington sprang to his feet. His features were terrible. For a brief instant they glared at each other in grim silence, one menacing, self-sufficient, the other like a lion brought to bay."

"Well, young man!" Mr. Winslow began, his voice rumbling like an approaching storm, "you perhaps now recognize your incapacity to cope with

ing impatience. "Can't you understand that your dealings to-day had no bearing on my action unless, perhaps, it forced my hand prematurely?" The expression of doubt on his listener's face plainly evinced that he could not, and he continued, indignantly: "You flatter yourself if you think I recognise more than the hot, impulsive youth in you. Had you been thousands of miles away, this slump in the market would have occurred just the same."

Harrington's fury sputtered against suppression, his self-control fast ebbing, and he dared not trust himself to speak.

Believing he had at last tamed this young lion, Mr. Winslow began once more and now with some trace of tolerance in his voice. "From all accounts of your purchases, I judge you are mortgaged to the hilt. Is it not so?" Pausing a moment and receiving no denial, he continued: "Can you withstand another drop of ten points?"

"Not five," Harrington admitted.

"The indications are—"

"Unfavorable for me."

"Very—unless!"

"Unless!" Jack repeated tensely.

"You accept immunity from the blow."

"I don't understand you."

"I came here to take over your holdings."

"You mean—you would have me transfer to you, privately, the purchases I have on the open market?"

"Exactly—I am willing to do so for reasons you may readily understand."

"My God!" Harrington exclaimed, his voice low and trembling, "are you blind to all else save your passion for conquest? Would you think me worthy of your daughter? Do you think she would not despise me were I to crawl out from underneath this wreck, unharmed, and sink away, while other men lie buried in the ruins of defeat? If I have forced this slaughter, as you say, do you believe I could hold my hand up among men after it had been said I fell on my knees at your feet, begging for mercy? No! A thousand times no. Give my name—my honor—in exchange for immunity for your damnable power—never!"

"Young man, do you know who you are talking to?" Mr. Winslow almost shrieked. He stood as if apoplexied, purple with rage, veins protruding in little knots on his broad forehead.

"Know you! I'm just beginning to, but the knowledge has not stricken me to the soul with terror. I don't fear you because you exult in your power to crush the spirit and strength out of your victims to aid your own purpose. Force me to the wall if you can, that a thousand times rather than submit to your conditions. I've gone into the affair with my eyes open, and I see but one way out of it. I'll fight to the last bitter minute and take my medicine, when you have finished yours."

He left off speaking abruptly, the sudden burst of passion wrought itself into consciousness of its own ugly, ungainly imprudence. A great wave of remorse went through him and words of contrition sprang into his heart, as for the first time he saw the twitching lips and drawn, white face of his elder. His features softened and flushed scarlet; with embarrassment he shifted awkwardly. "My temper got the better of me," he said quietly, "I ask your pardon."

Never before had this "Monarch of Finance" been spoken to thus, and his dignified bearing of command gave way to the unexpected battery of this towering young giant. A trembling hand passed over his eyes as if to wipe away the unreality of it all, his lips moved without giving utterance. "Oh!" he gasped and hurriedly left the room.

(Continued on May 5th.)

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"If you have come here to gloat over your prey, I warn you to stop before you go too far." Harrington interrupted fiercely, choking down the hot rush of words rising in his throat. Then modulating his voice, with a great effort he continued, "Are you not satisfied, having made me the subject of ridicule—the jesting stock of your power?"

"I did not come here to discuss my methods," snapped the other, furiously. "And little reason for it, now that you have gained your point."

"If I understand your allusion, and I think I do, you are wrong, though I have no hesitancy in saying you have interfered with my plans."

"And you try to kick me out of your path as you would a dog?"

"If you insist—yes."

"Humph! At least you are candid."

"And you are as equally exasperating," Mr. Winslow returned, with grow-

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