

Opportunity

By EDGAR FRANKLIN

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CHAPTER III.—(Continued)

Wilkins—the priceless, faultless Wilkins who had been with Anthony for sixteen years—opened the door and even though he were Wilkins, started a trifle at the sight of David and his cap. He flushed for the start to be sure, as his master moved into the big living room with his superb dignity, but when he had taken cap and coat and examined the suit beneath, Wilkins had come that evening in the knowledge that Johnson Bolter, whom Wilkins did not approve was to be with them, but this young ruffian!

"Make yourself at home, David," Anthony smiled. "We'll shed our coats and find our smoking jackets."

Johnson Bolter with him, he moved to the corner bedroom, to face his old friend with:

"Well, what do you think of him?" "He's a bad egg," Johnson Bolter said readily. "I don't like his eye and the way he swaggers would get him six months in any court in town. Say whatever it is the devilish impulse prompts you to say and then fire him before he pinches the silver."

"Bosh!" Anthony said testily. "The boy's awed and self-conscious—the swag is assumed to cover that of course. I mean, what in your decidedly inferior judgment is his fitness as a subject for experiment. Will he know opportunity when she is first set before him or will it be necessary to present her repeatedly?"

Johnson Bolter laughed harshly and stared hard at his old friend. Under certain conditions, the empty apartment on Riverside Drive might not be so bad.

"Say," he demanded. "Are you going to keep that little rat and argue with him until he admits that he recognizes whatever opportunity you thrust at him?"

"Essentially that." "Well, if it's an opportunity to earn an honest living, he'll never see it—and if the chance takes more than an hour I'm going home," Johnson Bolter snapped. "I'd have stayed there if I'd known you were going off into the abstract. I wanted to talk to you and have a little game of chess and a bottle."

Anthony smiled serenely. "And the mere fact that a train of thought, only slightly unusual, has entered your evening, has upset your whole being, hasn't it? Well, it'll do you good to hear and watch something different. This boy will see opportunity before I'm done with him, Johnson and the longer it takes the sounder my general hypothesis will have been proven."

Curiously enough, David had just much of his grinning assurance when they rejoined him. The impudence had left his eye and the boy seemed downright uneasy. He started and rose at the sight of them, and his quick nervous smile lingered only a moment as he said:

"I think I'd better be going after all Mr. Fry. It's pretty late and—"

"Just a minute or two, and perhaps you'll change your mind," Anthony said quietly as he dropped into his seat. "You'll permit a personal question or two, David?"

"I suppose so." "Then—how old are you?" "Twenty."

"Ah! Parents living?" David nodded.

"And in rather humble circumstances, perhaps?" This time David glanced at him keenly, gazing for an instant—opened his eyes and shut them again and ended with a mere jerk of a nod.

"How about schooling, David? Have you been through high school?" "Er—yes."

"And have you a profession?" Anthony pursued.

"No, I haven't any profession," the boy muttered.

"But you're working, of course?" Mr. Fry asked sharply.

"What? Oh, yes," said David. "At some mechanical line?" "Oh, yes," David said.

"In just what line, then?" And now, had Anthony but been watching some of Johnson Bolter's suspicious must have seemed justified. There was no question about the way David's very intelligent eyes were acting now; they darted furtively, wildly almost, from side to side, as the boy was seeking escape. They darted to ward Anthony and away from him and back to David's stabby suit and worn shoes.

"I'm a plumber's helper!" the boy said hastily.

"Wait a second, kid!" Mr. Bolter put in. "Let me see those hands!" "Well, they—they haven't had time to get roughened up yet!" David said quickly. "I just went to work yesterday."

"The boy's lying, Anthony!" Mr. Bolter said bluntly.

"I don't lie, Mr.—" "Bolter," Anthony supplied. "And please don't badger the boy, Johnson." "I'm not badgering him," said Johnson Bolter; "only that kid's hands look more like a society queen's than an honest workman's."

"They may be hands designed for better things, David! Tell me, are you quite satisfied to be a plumber's helper, or was it the only thing you could find in the way of employment?" "It was all I could find," David muttered, glancing at the door. And then with his quick smile, he rose again. "I'd like to sit here and answer questions, Mr. Fry, but I'll have to run along and—"

his stare at David grew quite hypnotic. "Ah, here it is—a little, wonderfully big poem by the late Senator John Ingalls. It is called—'Opportunity.'"

"Aha!" David said rather stupidly. "And now, listen," said Anthony, clearing his throat.

"Master of human destinies am I!" He paused and sent the hypnotic smile drilling into David.

"Master of human destinies!" he repeated. "That, in itself, means a very great deal, does it not?"

"I guess so," David muttered dazedly, and, however briefly, Johnson Bolter almost liked him for the look he directed at Anthony's bowed head. "Fame, love and fortune on my footsteps wait,

Cities and fields I walk; I penetrate Deserts and seas remote, and passing by Hovel and mart and palace, soon or late I knock unbidden once at every gate. "Once," concluded Anthony, "at every gate. Once David!"

"Yes, I've heard that poem before," said David, who was examining the rug.

Johnson Bolter laughed in a rich undertone. Anthony flushed, and his voice rose a little as he continued: "If feasting, rise; if sleeping, wake before I turn away. It is the hour of fate. And they who follow me reach every state. Mortals desire, and conquer every foe. Save death . . ."

The owner of Fry's Imperial Liniment looked over his glasses and discovered that David, having poked open the door of the little-used cellar with his foot, was looking in at the bottles with mild interest.

"Every foe save death!" Anthony rapped out. "Did you hear that, David?"

"Yes, of course," David said hastily. "Do you know what time it is, Mr. Fry?"

"No! Hear the rest!" said Anthony. . . . But those who doubt or hesitate, Condemned to failure, penny or woe, Seek me in vain and ceaselessly implore, I answer not and I return no more!"

And now, before the penetrating, hypnotic eye, David seemed, not without warrant, to have grown downright frightened. He glanced swiftly at Anthony and at the door.

"I don't know," he said breathlessly. "What's the answer?"

"Well, what do you want to become? A doctor? A lawyer? A teacher? A journalist? A clergyman? A painter? An architect? A mining engineer? A civil engineer?"

It was plain to Johnson Bolter that the situation was getting beyond David's doubtless nimble, doubtless unimpaired mind. The boy held up an unsteady hand and stayed the flow.

"That's it!" he said hoarsely. "A civil engineer! You got it out of me, didn't you? And now I'd better go and—"

His quick, scared grin showed all his teeth, and he nodded in the most ridiculous fashion—really much in the fashion one might nod at a hopeless lunatic when agreeing, as a matter of course, he is the original Pharaoh. His mental state fairly glowed from him; all that David wanted was to leave the Hotel Lansdale.

David, in short was doing just what ninety-nine per cent of the human race insists on doing; even at the hint of opportunity he was trying to face about and escape. But more than that, David, obviously one of the lower classes, was treating Anthony Fry with a tolerance that was more than disrespected. He was causing Johnson Bolter to chuckle wearily over his cigar—and in spite of his purely abstract interest, Anthony's color grew darker and his voice decidedly sharper.

"Sit still," he commanded, "and listen to me. David, up to this evening you had no real hope of attaining your ambition. In fine, opportunity to make the goal was not yours. Now opportunity is yours!"

"Is it?" David said throatily, albeit he did not resume his seat.

"Because this is what I mean to do for you, David; I mean to take you out of your present humble situation and educate you. I mean to have you here to live with me."

"What?" David gasped.

"From this very evening!" Anthony said firmly, and also astonishingly. "I shall outfit you properly and supply you with what money you need. I shall have you prepared for the best engineering college we can find, and entered there for the most complete engineering course. If you are helping in the support of your family, I shall pay them a sum equivalent to your wages each month—or perhaps a little more, if it be essential to removing all anxiety from your mind. You follow me?"

David merely clenched the edge of his coat and gulped, staring fascinatedly at Anthony.

"I am reasonably wealthy, and I shall bear every expense that you may incur, David. When you have graduated, and everything that can be taught you has been taught you, I shall establish you in proper offices and use my personal influence to see that you are supplied with work, and again until you are self-supporting I shall bear all the expense. In short, David," Anthony concluded, "I am holding opportunity before you—opportunity to do, without trouble or worry or delay, the thing you most desire. Well?"

Even Johnson Bolter was mildly interested, although only mildly, and with a deprecating smile on his lips. He knew exactly what the boy would do, of course, but it had no connection with Anthony's cracked-brain notion. David would grab with both hands at this kind of opportunity and settle down to a life of ease, and the chances were that he'd get Anthony to sign something that would cost him thousands when he had wasted up and lost interest in the opportunity proposition.

To Johnson's sleepy and suspicious eye David looked like a crafty little devil, if one ever walked. Yet after a silent thirty seconds opportunity, in her gaudiest and most conspicuous form, had made no visible impression on David Prentiss. His bewildered eyes roved from Anthony to Johnson Bolter. Once he seemed about to laugh; again he seemed about to speak; he did neither.

And the clock struck twelve. And had a bomb exploded between his poorly shod feet, the effect on David Prentiss could hardly have been more striking. He started, and his eyes, dilating, lost their bewildered and showed plain, overwhelming horror. His mouth opened with a shout of:

"What do you think of that?" "Very likely," Anthony said impatiently. "But as to—"

"Where's my cap and coat?" David demanded.

"Never mind your cap and coat. I—"

"But I do mind 'em!" David cried. "I've got to have them—quick! Where are they? Where's the man who took them?"

Anthony merely smiled with waxing curiosity.

"If you are really rejecting opportunity at the first knock?" he mused.

And now David stilled his rising excitement only with a huge effort. He gripped his chair and looked Anthony in the eye.

"Opportunity be—hanged!" he cried shrilly. "Give me my cap and coat! I want to go home."

CHAPTER IV. The Reluctant One. One knew Anthony Fry for two or three decades before quite understanding him. David's great disadvantage, of course, was that he had met Anthony only an hour or so before. To David, doubtless, the quiet, mysterious, speculative smile seemed sinister, for he repeated thickly:

"I want my—my cap and my coat."

"Well, what are you going to do if you don't get them?" Anthony laughed.

"What did you say?" David asked quickly.

"What if you don't get your coat?" "Does that mean you're going to keep me here, whether I want to stay or not?" the boy asked quickly.

"Not just that, perhaps, but it does mean that I am going to keep you here for a little while, David, until you've come to your senses and—"

"I'll yell," David stated.

"If you try to keep me here I'll yell until everybody in the house comes in to see what's happening!"

"Don't be ridiculous, David," he said. "I've lived here for years, and they will know perfectly well that I'm not injuring you in any way."

"Oh!" gasped David.

"So just sit down again and consider—and then give me your answer."

Finger-tips drumming, benevolent gaze beaming over his glasses, the unusual Anthony waited. David's scared eyes roved the room, wandered over Johnson Bolter, reading his paper, and finally settled so steadily on that gentleman that he looked up and, looking, read David's mind and shrugged his shoulders.

"Your own fault, kid," said he. "I wanted to give you a free ride, but you had to come up and hear what he had to say."

"Johnson!" Anthony said sharply. "Just let the youngster's mental processes work the thing out in their own way."

Half a minute dragged along—yet before it was gone one saw clearly that the mental processes had taken their grip. An extremely visible change was manifest. David Prentiss. He gulped down certain emotions of his own, and presently managed to smile, uneasily at first and then with a certain confidence. He cleared his throat and with a slight huskiness addressed Anthony:

"Er—do I understand that you want me to stay here until I fully appreciate all you've offered me, Mr. Fry?"

"Virtually that."

"Well, I appreciated that all along; but—I was sort of worried about it getting so late, you know," David said brightly. "I certainly do appreciate it, and I thank you very much. Now can I have my coat?"

"Really decided to grip the opportunity, eh?" Anthony asked keenly. "You bet!"

Johnson Bolter laid aside his paper. "Now chase him, Anthony!" he said. "He's standing up and holding the sugar on his nose. Slip the kid a five dollar bill and let Wilkins—"

"Do you really imagine that I'd rouse all the boy's hopes and then play him a shabby trick like that?" Anthony asked sharply.

"Huh?"

"Most emphatically not!" Mr. Fry said. "I'll play no such shabby trick on the youngster. He shall have exactly the chance I promised, and I shall watch the working out of the idea with the most intense interest. David, I'm going to keep you here from this minute!"

"Keep me here?" David echoed blankly.

"Certainly."

David gazed fixedly at the electro-

lier.

"Well, I'll tell you, Mr. Fry," he said. "I'd like to stay tonight, but I can't—not tonight. You see, I have to go home to my father. He's an invalid."

"We'll telephone the good news to him," Anthony smiled.

"You can't," said David. "We're too poor to have a telephone."

"Very well. Then we'll wire him." David shook his head energetically.

"That wouldn't do, either," said he. "Father's sick, you know. His heart's very weak. He's got a sight of a telegram might kill him."

"Unfortunately!" Anthony sighed and shrugged his shoulders. "Very well, David. Then you shall write him a note, and I'll have Wilkins take it to him."

David swallowed audibly and smiled a wild little smile.

"Oh, no! Not that sir!" said he. "That might be even worse than a telegram, I think."

"Why?"

"Well, father would be likely to think that I'd been—been injured and taken into some swell home, you know, and that I was writing that just to reassure him. No," David said firmly. "That would be the worst possible thing. I'll have to go myself and talk it over with my father and—now if I can have my cap and coat?"

It came as a familiar refrain. An-answered Anthony's eye to darken suddenly as he set back and stared at the boy.

"Confound your hat and coat!" he rapped out. "See here, David. You write the note, and I myself will take it to your father and explain—and be sure that he will rejoice. There is the desk. Where do you live?"

His tone was not nearly so benevolent. Opposition, as always, was rousing Anthony's unfortunate stubbornness, with or without reason, had David but known it, every mention of that cap and coat was diminishing his chances of walking out of the Lansdale—and it is possible that he sensed something of the kind, for his smile disappeared abruptly, and the assurance that had been with him was no more.

"I can't tell you where I live!" he said hoarsely.

"In the name of heaven, why not?" Anthony snapped.

(To be continued.)

CHARITON. Mrs. D. Armour of Ottumwa visited in this city Tuesday with Mrs. Nell Rowley.

Mr. and Mrs. Lester Combs went to Indianapolis Tuesday evening to spend a few days with his sister, Mrs. Alex. Graves.

Dr. T. M. Throckmorton and daughter, Dr. Jeannette, were in Ottumwa yesterday attending a meeting of the Wapello County Medical association. Dr. Jeannette was on the program for a paper.

Mrs. Walter Larimer of Cedar township went to Woodburn yesterday to visit her sister, Mrs. Fern Jennings.

Mrs. Emil Larson and little son, Vincent, left yesterday for a week's visit with relatives in Albion and Hite-man.

Henry Miller of Leocsa came yesterday for a visit with his niece, Mrs. Belle Mason.

Mrs. A. Stephenson returned Tuesday from a visit in Princeton, Mo., with her niece, Mrs. C. Bowdre, who with her four children, accompanied her to Chariton, going on to Shenandoah yesterday to visit relatives.

Mrs. Bessie Hamilton of Indianapolis was a visitor in this city yesterday enroute to Purdy to visit Mrs. Noel Cloud.

Mrs. A. P. Buffington, who had been visiting her sister, Mrs. W. H. Penick, and brother, D. A. Enslow, and other relatives and old friends, left yesterday for a visit in Albion, Mo. Her husband, Col. A. P. Buffington, who has been in the regular army for many years, was also here last week. They will go soon to Washington, D. C.

Mrs. O. B. Rose of Bushnell, Ill., is visiting in Chariton with her cousins, Mrs. Enroute Gookin and Mrs. Ray Reed, enroute home from a visit at Camp Dodge, in Des Moines, with her son, William, who was the first one down in the selective draft at Bushnell and the seventh in the state of Illinois.

Mrs. L. R. Davis of Washington came yesterday afternoon for a visit at the home of her son, C. W. Davis.

FARMINGTON. Mrs. Wm Robertson and son, Emmett of Oklahoma are visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. Lewis Newman.

M. G. Patrick, the Rock Island agent, is visiting his parents at Wash- ington, Wash. During his absence L. F. Farley of Carlisle will have charge of the Rock Island office.

The Commercial club held their regular monthly meeting Friday evening in the club room. Matters pertaining to the welfare of the town were discussed.

Rev. Munster of the M. E. church is attending the district conference which is being held at Mt. Union.

Noah Davis of Farmington and Mrs. Looms of Keokuk, a colored couple, were recently married and are at home at the home of the groom, south of Farmington.

Mrs. A. M. Sibert and daughter, Virginia, left Friday for a visit with relatives at Carrollton, Mo.

Chapter O. P. E. O. had a pleasant meeting Monday evening at the home of Mrs. C. L. Paisley. The committee in charge of the program, composed of Mesdames Alice Jack and Myra Hassler, passed each member a slip of paper with the request to write her most economical practice in rhyme.

Miss Forgrave was awarded the prize for the best verse. The prize was a neat little leather-bound blank book for recipes.

Mrs. Fred Murphy and Mrs. Ray Thompson were Keokuk visitors last Thursday.

G. B. Rube and sister, Mrs. Holder of Prairie City, who have been visiting their sister, Mrs. Fred Von Seggin, returned home Saturday.

George Vickers of Leavenworth, Kan., was a recent guest of his parents, Harvey Vickers and wife, Helen. J. N. Sutton and daughter, Helen, of Bloomfield were being visited at the W. M. McIntosh home.

Mrs. Prall of Keosauqua was a recent guest of Mrs. Ella Stone.

Mrs. King of Ft. Madison was called here by the illness of her sister, Mrs. Boto.

Mrs. John Lapsley is visiting friends at Des Moines.

Dr. and Mrs. C. L. Paisley have gone to Excelsior Springs, Mo., for a visit with the latter's brother, Dr. Ed Musgrave and family.

DINNER STORIES

The friend who had dropped in to see d'Auber, the great animal painter, put the finishing touches on his latest painting. He was mystified, however, when d'Auber took some raw meat and rubbed it vigorously over the painted rabbit in the foreground.

"Why on earth do you do that?" he asked.

"Well, you see," explained d'Auber. "Mrs. Millions is coming to see this picture today. When she sees her pet poodle smell that rabbit and get excited over it she'll buy it on the spot."

The teacher was trying to impress upon her class the necessity of regulating the sinful human heart, and to drive her point home she produced her watch.

"Now, girls," she said, "you all see this watch—an assertion so obviously true that there was no danger of contradiction. 'Now,' she continued, 'just suppose for a moment that it did not keep correct time, that I found it was willing to do any way but the right way, what should I do with it?'"

There was the usual pause which pupils indulge in because it flatters the teacher by making her suppose her problem is a deep one, and that her wisdom is, therefore, profound. Then a bright little girl held up her hand.

"Please miss," she said, "you would sell it to a friend!"

"You have to pay fare for that child, madam," said the conductor. "But he's only 8 years old." "We collect for all children over 7." "Well, why don't you have your silly old rules put up where people can see them?"

DES MOINES GIRLS MAY BE EXPELLED

Des Moines, Nov. 10.—Over a hundred Des Moines high school girls may be expelled for defiant violation of the school board's anti-secret society order.

Investigation of an innocent-appearing society item in local newspapers led to proof of evidence that five strong sororities existed in the high schools.

An anti-secret society law as applying to high schools was passed by the thirty-seventh general assembly.

KEOKUK'S BAND MASTER RESIGNS

Keokuk, Nov. 10.—John B. Kindig, veteran United States bandmaster and soloist with Gilmore's famous band, who has been leader of Kindig's concert band here, resigned following a rehearsal. Lack of appreciation of the band by local people and failure to maintain discipline are reasons assigned by Mr. Kindig for his resignation.

ALBIA DEFEATS CORYDON

Albia, Nov. 10.—The Albia High school football team added another victory to its list when they defeated Corydon with a score of 10 to 0. A good attendance was present to witness the game.

FAMED WHITE WAY DRAFTED

Chicago, Nov. 10.—Scores of persons were injured in railroad street car and elevated railway collisions and other accidents due to a heavy fog here this morning. The injuries were mostly of a slight nature.

Twenty-five or more persons were injured in a rear end collision in the yards of the Chicago and Alton railroad. Objects ten feet away were invisible. A fireman on an Illinois Central suburban train was unable to see a danger signal and the train and train which usually travels three minutes ahead of it. Two hundred passengers were shaken up and the fireman, A. Meltzer, was scalded. Six others were cared for at a hospital.

Mrs. J. S. Surridge of Dayton, Ohio, whose husband is a major stationed at Camp Grant, Rockford, was among the injured.

CHICAGO SAVING SMALLER

Chicago, Nov. 10.—Samuel Insull, president of the Commonwealth Edison company which furnishes Chicago with light, declared today the order from Washington regulating the hours during which electric signs may be lighted, will save but little coal in this city.

"The saving may amount to a few thousand tons a year," he said, "but as our company burns 5,000 or 6,000 tons daily the difference in the amount consumed in a year will not be great. The small signs which are allowed to burn amount to more in Chicago than they do in New York."

CHECK RETAIL PROFITS

Washington, D. C., Nov. 10.—In an effort to hold down retail coal profits to a reasonable margin the fuel administration today directed state fuel administrators to carefully check up local prices. Earlier in the week the administration empowered state administrators to direct revisions of retail prices.

The instructions sent out today called for reports by retailers to local committees to get the exact amount of gross margin charged. Where complaints are made that retail prices are too high, local fuel authorities are required to obtain from dealers complete statements of the cost of doing business.

BANK RESERVE DECREASES

New York, Nov. 10.—The actual condition of clearing house banks and trust companies for the week (five days) show that they hold \$109,539,440 reserve in excess of legal requirements. This is a decrease of \$1,300,170 from last week.

Children's Evening Story

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RED-HEAD.

On hot days in summer there was nothing that Paddy Muskrat liked better than floating about in the water beneath the shade of the great willow tree. And Paddy was not the only one that liked to do that, either. Johnnie Green and some of the other boys that went to school in the little red schoolhouse were fond of swimming under the big willow.

Paddy Muskrat always scolded when they came for a swim in the mill-pond. But there was nothing he could do—except wait until they went away. To be sure, he had spoken to Mr. Turtle about the matter and suggested that Mr. Turtle bite Johnnie Green's great toe.

"Then maybe those boys will keep out of the pond," said Paddy Muskrat. But Mr. Turtle said that it might make too much talk. (Paddy Muskrat thought that he was really afraid to do it!)

Paddy was much annoyed when—the hottest day of the summer—Johnnie Green and three of his playmates came to the big willow just as Paddy had begun to enjoy the cool water there.

"I hope they won't stay long," Paddy said, as he hid himself under the bank. "If I couldn't swim any better than those boys I'd be ashamed to go into the water."

The boys had not splashed in the pond long when one of them—a red-haired boy—said he had to hurry home to help rake hay.

Paddy Muskrat was pleased when he heard that. He hoped the others would soon leave, too. "If I couldn't swim any better than those boys I'd be ashamed to go into the water."

"You have to pay fare for that child, madam," said the conductor. "But he's only 8 years old." "We collect for all children over 7." "Well, why don't you have your silly old rules put up where people can see them?"

ALL RAILWAYS SEEK ADVANCE

GENERAL DEMAND FOR HIGHER FREIGHT RATES FIXES NO LIMIT.

Washington, D. C., Nov. 10.—Application of all railroads of the country for freight rate increases to meet wartime operating costs was seen here today in the action of the western carriers in asking the interstate commerce commission for a conference to discuss a general advance of an unspecified amount. The commission set December 17 as the date of the hearing. Eastern roads have asked increases and southern roads are expected to do likewise.

Western railroads in their application for higher freight rates probably will enter the general 15 per cent rate case without specifying a definite increase in their petition, it was said today. The commission will then be in position to declare precisely what raise, if any, is just to meet the increase in cost of labor, supplies and materials.