

JOHN RAWN
 Prominent Citizen
 BY Emerson Hough
 Author of 'The Mistletoe Bubble' & '40 or Fight'
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CHAPTER IX.

Asparagus, Also Potatoes.

What is written in Potatoes. Grace moved to Graystone Hall and Halsey remained at the factory cottage; nor did the separation, which was regarded by both as merely temporary after all, afflict either to the extent that both had supposed it would. Grace now became acting mistress of a large and elaborate menage. As to her husband, his domestic affairs fell into the hands of Mrs. Ann Sullivan, wife of Jim Sullivan, Halsey's most trusted foreman in the factory.

Mrs. Sullivan, blessed with six children of her own, alleged that it would be no trouble whatever to her to take on the sweeping, mending, and all else for an additional household, and to furnish meals for the solitary head thereof; and such was her ability to make proof of all these statements that she in part was to blame for the sad truth that Halsey was not as unhappy as he ought to have been.

The chief reason for Halsey's easy readjustment, however, lay somewhere in his comparison of the Halsey blood with blood half Rawn. Grace had been cold, after all. She had openly been discontented, and especially unhappy since the birth of the deformed child. She had left him and gone to her father with no great protest; nor did she, at the occasions of her rare and lessening visits, display more than lukewarm interest in her husband and her former home. Within six months she was beginning to blossom out in reinment, in demeanor. She spoke of things not in his knowledge though in hers. She was changing. She was going up in the world. He, for the time at least, was doing no better than to stand still; as the factory now was doing, and International Power, also—marking time, waiting for something.

Ann Sullivan was not a bad philosopher, besides being a good cook, and at times she did not hesitate to engage Mr. Halsey in conversation when they met at this or that time of the day; as when by chance, one non-tide when he came home for lunch, he found her sweeping down the front stair.

"You're lookin' lonesome to-day, Mr. Halsey," she remarked without much preliminary. "You're fair grievin' for your wife, I suppose? But why should you expect any woman to stay here when she has such a Pa, with such a house as her Pa has?"

"Would you have gone over there, Mrs. Sullivan?" asked Halsey, stopping and feeling in his pocket for a pipe of tobacco. It was a question they often had discussed.

"Would I? In a minute! I'd love Jim Sullivan for ever if I'd one chance such as your wife had."

She grinned, but her look belied her speech.

"What I'm wantin', Mr. Halsey," she went on, "is what any woman wants. I want a diamond star to wear on me head when I'm sweeping fures. I need d'mond earrings and bracelets to wear when I'm makin' your beds, you mind; and a silk dress that hollers 'I'm a-comin'' when I start out to scrub the steps. Ain't it the truth, Mr. Halsey? Ain't that what every woman in the wurld, at last in America, is wantin'?"

"Sure," nodded Halsey. "Don't forget the automobile while you're wishin'."

"True it is! What woman of any social position has not got her awtomobile to-day? Luk at me. If I had me rights, I'd have me electric broom brought to the coorb ivery mornin' for me to go to market; and ivery evenin', after I'd got me sweepin' done, I'd have me long gray torpedy come around to take me and Jim out for a fast spin up the bullyward. Me with d'monds on me hair, with rings on me fingers an' bells on me toes, a settin' there an' lukkin' scornful. Oh, I was born in Ireland, but I'm American now. The day Jim Sullivan gives me what I'm due, and I git me first awtomobile, 'twill be the proud day for me—the day when I'm first fined for 'vlatin' the speed law of the city 'Tis a great country, this!"

Mrs. Sullivan grinned happily at her romances; but presently set her broom against the door-jamb and turned to speak more in her real mind.

loved her man and her children." "I'm glad you think so, Mrs. Sullivan." "You know I think so! Oh, maybe it's because I wasn't born in this country. Over there, 'tis the woman helps to make the stake. Here, she helps to spend it. 'Tis a fine country this—for policemen. So far as bein' happy in it's concerned, I dunno! Maybe it's the Irish in me that's happy, and not the American. I dunno again. 'Tis all a question which you want to be, rich or happy!"

"Or useful!" ventured Halsey. "They're the same. Bein' useful is bein' happy. Ain't it the truth?" Halsey nodded again and Mrs. Sullivan reached once more for her implement of industry.

"Jim Sullivan fits in his job," said she. "He's strong and can hold his job all right. I'm strong, and I can hold mine here, just the same. We've only six children, and I wish 'twas a dozen. No, it's no trouble to take care of this house, too. I'm only thinkin' of that little lamb of yours she tuk away with her. 'Tis a mother she nades."

"Please don't, Mrs. Sullivan," said Halsey quietly. "I mane no harm, and I'm feelin' fer you, me boy, you havin' a crippled child to face the world where even the strong has hard enough times ahead. Still, she'll have money, may be!"

"Well, Mrs. Sullivan, I'm not sure of that—"

"Of course it's none of me business—of course not. But only look at the eye and only hear the birds this mornin'! You're young, and God may give you two yet the dozen that I have longed for, 'enied as I do be with only six. You'll be goin' up yerself some day, with all them rich folks, Mr. Halsey, boy. I'm stayin' here with Jim Sullivan. When we can't afford sparrows we eat potatoes."

"But tell me, Mr. Halsey," she went on shrewdly, "how long will we be havin' even potatoes to eat? Ye don't keep min there in the factory long—there's not many at wurk now. Besides, there's no smoke in them chimbleys! And 'tis time. What's the mystery there, boy?"

"A good deal of labor troubles," commented Halsey non-committally. "More than that!" she insisted, drawing close to him. "Listen! I mane well to you, boy, and so does Jim. He'll stick. But Jim told me the night that he could walk out, and pick up a clean tin thousand dollars fer the walkin'!"

Halsey controlled himself. This was news of staggering sort. "Why doesn't he, then, Mrs. Sullivan? That's a good deal of money," he said quietly.

"Yes, why doesn't he?—with me half American and 'gettin' more so each year—me a needin' d'monds and awtomobiles! The fool Irish! 'Tis maybe his idiotic idea he ought to stick."

Halsey made no answer except to look over at the gaunt factory buildings. A blue-coated figure was pacing back and forth before the door.

"There's Jim Sullivan workin' inside, and there's the Tim Carney walkin' beat outside," she resumed; "and the pickets tryin' to break in, and some one else tryin' to break in. What's it about, Mr. Halsey? For the company? What's the company?"

"It furnishes asparagus for some, and potatoes for others, Mrs. Sullivan."

"Oh, does it, then? Does it mind that potatoes costs more than they did, or so pay us better, or worse, for what we do? If what we eat goes up, we can't live; and if we can't live, them that can has got to support us somehow. Ain't it the truth? What's the end of it, me boy?"

"I'm not askin' about the justice of it, but about the business of it. If our men starve, what'll we do? Mr. Halsey, sir, we'll raise hell! That's what we'll do! Too much asparagus in this country, and too few potatoes, and them of a bad class, is goin' to raise hell in this country. Ain't it the truth?"

"Luk at Jim workin' there. And luk at Tim protectin' of him. 'Tis fine, isn't it? I'm thankin' God, meself, there's birds and sunshine in the world. If it wasn't for him and the priest, I'm wonderin' sometimes what us poor folks would do."

"The theory is that some men are born stronger than others, Mrs. Sullivan, and so entitled to the asparagus," smiled Halsey.

enough. It was worse than serious. He had been sufficiently warned. Why, then, his pipe cold in his teeth, did he sit staring now and think of things altogether apart from the factory? Why did he dream of the birds and the sunshine? Why did comparisons still force themselves into his mind, and why did he long for something life had not yet brought to him—something that Ann Sullivan and her man owned, though they had so little else?

CHAPTER X.

The Silent Partner.

There are men who make a living, sometimes a very good one, through the process of teaching others to do what they themselves can not do. You can purchase for a price in any of many quarters printed maxims embodying full formulae covering the secret of success; in each case from one who has not succeeded. Nothing is cheaper than maxims, in type, in words, or in transparencies. To be in the fashion you should have certain of these above your desk, and should incline your ear to those who profess to teach what can not be taught even by those most nearly fitted to teach.

John Rawn cared little for maxims; being above them in his own belief at least. In all likelihood he had never read the advice of the philosopher, to wit: that each man should hitch his wagon to a star. No, he knew something better. He hitched his to a river.

Very naturally, John Rawn selected the largest river he could find. His silent partner was none less than the Father of the Waters!

There is this to be said about a river, that it is wholly tireless and immeasurably powerful; that it enters into no combinations against capital, and does its work without unseemly disturbances. Rawn was wise enough to know these things, nor asked any maxims to advise him therein. In his belief it was better to allow this sort of silent partner to furnish the industry and the economy.

Who shall measure the power of a river, for ever falling to the sea? How many millions of horses and men has it equaled in its wasted power in each generation, in each decade, in each year? Certainly sufficient to lift the entire burden of labor from the shoulders of the world.

What mind can measure the extent of such a force, or dream the possibilities of its application, if it could be set to work? What equivalent of human brain and brawn could be valued against this careless, ceaseless power, derived endlessly from the air and the earth—power given to the peoples of the earth before the arrival of our present political and industrial masters; given them in the time when the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof. The minerals under the earth, the food produced in the soil, the waters offering paths and power—before the earth and its fullness passed from the hands of the Lord into those of our present masters, these, it may be conceived, were intended as the Lord's gift to the peoples of the earth. That, however, was quite before the advent of John Rawn.

Toil has always been the human lot. We have carried the mechanical burdens as well as the mental burdens of life on our own human bodies and souls; although all the time thousands of patient giants were waiting, willing to serve us. John Rawn could see them waiting. He knew to whom one day would be due the power, and the kingdom, and the glory. He could look toward the white-topped mountains, foreseeing the day when they would be put under tribute, because they breed tumbling waters of immeasurable strength and utility. Their heritage of beauty and majesty is naught to minds such as that of John Rawn's. Utility is the one word in the maxims of such as these, men beloved of the immortal gods.

We speak of kings, of emperors, but what emperor in all the history of the world had servants such as these, submissive giants such as these, to work for him? We speak of miracles of old. What miracles ever equaled the business wonders, the money-making miracles, of the last twenty years in America?

Where gat this silent partner of John Rawn's its own tremendous power? Out of the sun and the earth, the parents of humanity. The rain-drops on the leaf, shot through with the shaft of the sun, fell to some near-by rill and, joined by other rills, marched on, alive, tireless, tremendous, toward the sea. Even far up toward their source, had your little boat lodged, counter to the current, on some rock or snag, and had you attempted to push it back against the thrust of the downcoming waters, you

Jim Sullivan stood now looking at the grim, uncanny machine, hands in his pockets, wondering. He looked about him, superstitiously. There seemed to be something in the air, he could not explain what. He turned, looking behind him, and uptoed to the front door, where Tim Carney, the blue-coated guardian, stood leaning against the wall.

"Tim!" he whispered, although there was none to hear. "Come on in here!" "What is it, Jim?" asked the watchman.

"I dunno; that's why I'm callin' you."

"Has anny wan broke into th' place?"

"Not as I know, but somethin's happened here. I'm figurin' 'twas the boss done it. Come in and have a luk, now. He's gone home."

They stepped gingerly on across the floor, along the row of unfinished ma-

might have got some knowledge of the power of even a little stream. Ten feet below you, that power again would have been quite as great; and ten feet below that again as great; and so on, to the sea. It required the advice of no professional maxim makers to teach a few of our great men, our specially endowed superiors, John Rawn first among them, that this power one day must be used. In accordance as it shall be used, the burden of humanity may be lifted from human shoulders, or thrust crushingly down upon them until indeed humanity shall cease to hope. The earth and its fullness are no more the Lord's today. They are John Rawn's.

The simple plan of the International Power company was to make some strong obstruction inviting the enormous resistance of the Father of the Waters, tantalizing that power into being. Thus, in a manner perfectly simple, this force, once evoked and utilized, would turn numberless wheels endlessly tirelessly. So much for the material side of manifested power. The essence, the soul, the intangible spirit of that material power was, in the plans of International, to be transmitted by wire at first, and later through the free air. Its sale in definite and merchantable quantities would come as near to the solution of the problem of perpetual motion and perpetual profit as may be arrived at in this world of limitations.

Rawn asked nothing better than this idea. It was beautiful, and he valued it over all his many and various other ventures. He could let his silent partner put other men out of work; and so these could be recruited at such price as he himself cared to set. It was the time approach when he would be able to retail at a price, removed from his silent, tireless partner's labors, merchantable packages of power, to feed a cart, a plow, a wheel of any sort; power to lift and labor, to toil ceaselessly without remonstrance. It was and is a splendid dream. Its bearing is as you be Rawn or Halsey. That power shall labor for or against mankind as ourselves shall say.

Shall we blame ourselves, or John Rawn, in this republic, that he saw on ahead only limitless personal power, limitless gold, jewels, wine, women, personal indulgence of any sort that appealed to him? Shall we blame Halsey for dreaming the issue of these plans, delaying them all he could; clinging to the belief that the earth was the Lord's and the fullness thereof; and that the Lord gave it to all mankind? And shall we blame the stockholders for being impatient at renewed delays? The wire transmission was installed, making every man in the International rich. Yet every man in the secret of the real ambition of this company burned inwardly at this enforced secrecy and this unseemly delay. The mysterious factory at the edge of the great inland city still was silent. The directors raged. They wanted to drain to the last drop the strength even of this tireless giant. They wanted to begin to bottle, measure and sell, sell for ever, the very force which holds the spheres in their places. In time we shall perhaps see completed what these men planned. There is no logical reason why, if one planet can be owned by a John Rawn or so, yet others should not.

For a long time Jim Sullivan, foreman at the factory of the International, wondered and pondered as to the real intent of these strange machines which he saw little by little growing up under the uncommunicative direction of the superintendent, Halsey. He had never seen anything like them, with their vast coils of insulation, their intricate cogs and wheels, their centrally-hidden huge glass jars, and the long, toothed ridge, like a delicate metal comb, which surmounted the top of each. There was something mysterious about it all. He was sure that Halsey did something with these machines when the men were not about. The very air seemed throbbing with some tense quality of mystery. The men themselves were suspicious, irritable. Never was the air in any factory more surcharged alike with ignorance and with anxiety. Man after man, good mechanic though he was, quit the place simply because he did not know what he was doing. The feeling of mystery was tense, oppressive.

On one certain Sunday morning Jim Sullivan strolled over to the vacant factory. He knew that the superintendent had spent almost the entire night there working alone on one of these mysterious machines. It stood there now. And—yes! it was different from what it had been when Sullivan last saw it! It was now apparently complete, so far as he could tell. There was no one near it. Halsey had gone home, to bed. Of late he had been very tired, pale, haggard; and he always was at work in the factory, when good men slept, and knew light-winged dreams.

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