

CHASING A FORTUNE.

Both at school and at college Bernard Hooker had been one of the wildest and most dare-devil youths imaginable. He had been the terror of meek companions the aversion of order-loving dominies, the triumphant outwiter, on more than one occasion, of even that great man the proctor.

But these halcyon days were past. Any particular exuberance of spirits in Bernard's present position would have been as phenomenal and incongruous with his surroundings as the presence of English hedge-blossoms in an Eastern desert. He was chained to the oar of daily toil as tightly and as hopelessly as any galley-slave. The sturdy symmetry of his figure, the humorous cast of his frank and open countenance, the twinkle of his light-blue eyes, were all that outwardly remained of the idiosyncrasies that had made him the idol of his comrades in class and on college walk. The pressure of adverse circumstances had put an iron curb upon his vivacity, if it had not altogether crushed it.

He looked forward to reading for the bar, with the prospect, if he displayed ability, of a capital start in his chosen profession by reason of his father's position and influence. Instead of this, Bernard Hooker found himself, at the age of two-and-twenty, merely an insignificant unit in the already over-crowded ranks of professional quill-drivers.

His father had become the dupe of an unprincipled business partner, and had lost everything. Even Edwin Hooker's hitherto fair fame had suffered aspersion, for it had been hard to persuade the great careless world that the villainy, which had made the trading name of Hooker and Glanning a by-word in the city, was the work of Archer Glanning alone. Yet it was so, and the trial which followed the crash told a tale of forged signatures and stolen securities which set the elder and victimized partner free, and would have certainly relegated the junior to the keeping of prison-wardens for a long term of years, had he remained to face the storm. He had fled and carried with him Edwin Hooker's fortune.

Thus it came about that the son was earning his daily bread in the Fembury branch bank of Kenworth & Co. That he was located in the country, with open skies above him and pleasant fields around, was the one mitigating circumstance of his hard and dreary lot. In other respects even the average London bank clerk was better off. Mr. Hollis, Messrs. Kenworth's Fembury manager, was an irascible little man, who believed, as firmly as an Egyptian task-master, in getting the very utmost in the way of effort out of his subordinates. The bank hours might nominally be from 9 to 5, but he had a trick of piling on extras, which materially lengthened them.

It would be, "These letters cannot be left, Mr. Styles," or "This ledger requires attention, Mr. Hooker." To have refused or even expostulated, was to court instant dismissal, for Mr. Hollis was as passionate as he was haughty, and knew himself to be invested with plenary power within the bank precincts. There was no resource but to obey.

It was a bright May morning, fragrant in the Fembury lanes with the scent of early wild-flowers and vocal with melody of birds. It was market day in the little country town, and the clink of gold in consequence frequently resounded on the bank counter. As a rule Bernard Hooker paid little or no attention to the fitful processions of clients that passed the door on the right. He was not cashier, and the burden of his own duties was sufficient for his oftentimes weary shoulders. But as the surely office-clock announced the quarter before the luncheon interval the sound of a voice he surely knew mingled with its dull bass. An instinctive tremor ran through every fibre of the young man's body. He looked sharply up. What he saw for the moment puzzled him and seemed to refute the evidence of his ears.

The voice was emphatically that of Archer Glanning; the outward presentment of the speaker was that of an absolute stranger. But a closer scrutiny and the recollection of the fact that the accomplished swindler was of necessity a fugitive, explained the phenomenon. Edwin Hooker's absconding partner was of truth there in flesh before Bernard's eyes, but so cunningly disguised that the cleverest Scotland Yard detective might have been pardoned for a blunder. The shapely mustache and heavy beard had both vanished; the light auburn locks of the "Hue and Cry" description were now raven-black; the very eyebrows had discarded nature and applied to the artist in flesh and hair tinting.

In carriage and in attire the revolution was equally striking and equally complete. The stately, upright gait of the Lombard-street merchant was exchanged for a stooping shamble that would have provoked the ridicule of many a cloth-hopper. The trim dress—invariable on the model of the latest mode in past days—was superseded by a hybrid make-up of turf and stable costume.

And yet Bernard was sure of his man. That crisp, metallic utterance was in itself a well-nigh sufficient clew. It awakened bitter reminiscences with the enunciation of every syllable.

"Will you be good enough to cash this check, please?" The check was shoved out on the gleaming mahogany, and an instant later had found a new resting-place in the stranger's purse. He turned, and for a second caught the half-stupefied glance of the young clerk. The effect was magical—a scared, terror-stricken expression leaped into the furtive, shifty eyes, and every vestige of color forsook the shallow cheeks. Bernard Hooker was recognized in his turn.

With the sharp click of the closing door, Bernard's sense returned to him. Here, when least expected, was the opportunity of recovering lost hopes. The rumor that the scoundrel had sailed for South America was plainly false. He was still within reach of British Justice, and, if captured, might be compelled to disgorge and surrender, or at least such portion of it as was yet unquandered. He must be followed, tracked, and that instantly! The fatality that had brought him on some casual errand to Fembury and to Messrs. Kenworth's bank must be translated, by immediate enterprise into a manifestation of that Nemesis which, by the logic of story-books, treads inevitably on the heels of wrong.

A decision was reached in far less time than it takes to recount the fact. Bernard seized his hat, and with a muttered incoherent apology, pushed his way past his scandalized superior, and literally ran down the stone steps into the street.

"What is the meaning?—? Is the fellow mad?" gasped Mr. Hollis, a portentous frown gathering upon his brow. It was certainly mysterious behavior, and the fellow clerk to whom this query was presumably addressed was taken nearly as much aback as his chief. He had no explanation to offer.

Careless of the consternation which his abrupt proceeding had occasioned, Bernard's steps were toward the railway station. This was clearly the aim of the pursued.

To be thirty seconds too late is, under all circumstances, abundantly annoying. This was Bernard Hooker's lot on the present occasion. He reached the platform of the Fembury station just in time to see the up train steam into the yawning gulf of the north tunnel, and to know that in one of that train's compartments sat, in regained security, his father's foe and his own. There was nothing to do but to confess failure, and return, after dining, to the drug-gery of the bank desk. He did not even know the alias of the rogue, and after all, his evidence of identity, if sufficient for himself, might fail to convince another. It would be useless to appeal to the local police force, for these reasons.

"An impudent and madcap freak, Mr. Hooker, what may be your excuse," growled Mr. Hollis. "If you want to leave the office in a hurry again to overtake anybody—anybody, sir!—be good enough to ask leave."

Bernard was compelled to promise that he would. For the rest of the afternoon he went on his way with the tedious columns of figures in a state of mental agitation and chagrin unparalleled since the days on which he had first learned that his parent's bankruptcy was unavoidable.

"Those scraps of paper, Mr. Styles, had better ornament the waste-basket than the floor."

The manager's accents were harsh and querulous; his temper seemed to have been soured for the day by Bernard Hooker's escapade.

"I have dropped them, sir," replied the inculpated junior, resenting as much as he dared the implied charges of untidiness. "One fell from your own desk, and the other was left behind by the gentleman whom Mr. Hooker tried to catch."

Bernard's ears tingled anew. What if the last-mentioned fragment should bear upon its surface some clew to the villain's assumed name or whereabouts. By easy strategy he gained possession of the slip, and found it to be half an envelope, with the letters "JOHN—" on one side, and the postmark "Ickford" on the other. This might or might not lead to a discovery.

In the solitude of his own apartments that evening Bernard Hooker searched out the name of Ickford on a Bradshaw's map. He found it to be that of a small town in the north of England.

"Whatever the consequence, I'll run down there and make inquiries. If I win, the game will be worth the candle," he soliloquized.

And the next day a note in the bank letter box accounted—though hardly satisfactorily to the critical judgment of Mr. Hollis—for the second clerk's absence.

At Ickford the trail unmistakably struck. Skilful investigation showed that a Mr. Joynson—whose outward man appeared to tally precisely with Bernard's sketch-description—had been staying at the chief hotel for several weeks, and had posed as an individual of position and wealth. Alas! it showed also that he had decamped with both bag and baggage a few hours before Bernard's arrival.

"Foiled a second time!" moaned that young man, in bitterness of spirit. "The scamp has smelt danger, and probably will make for South America or some other safe hiding place in earnest now."

With hopes sinking rapidly below zero again, Bernard took ticket for London. He would put a professional detective on the track and then return to Fembury. If Mr. Hollis dismissed him

for his pains, he must just recommence his weary fight with fortune in some other arena.

"Why, Bernard! This is an agreeable surprise indeed! I was wondering not above a day or two ago what had become of my ancient ally. So many pranks as we've been guilty of together! Ha, ha!"

The speaker was Frank Allerton, Bernard's dearest college chum, and a young Northern squire, whose sister Amy—but this was a romantic dream which had faded into an absurdity in the thick gloom of enviroing disaster. Why recall it?

The new comer had joined the train at Cotchly Junction, and, like Bernard, was bound for the metropolis. As the friends were alone in the compartment, Bernard's story was soon told.

"And are you hunting the rascal down?"

"I have attempted it, and he has beaten me."

"What sort of a fellow is he—in personal appearance, I mean?"

For the fourth or fifth time Bernard ran glibly over the salient characteristics of that figure which fate, rather than any conscious mental effort, had photographed so minutely upon his memory.

"It is he exactly!" cried Frank Allerton, with an almost ludicrous combination of amazement, disgust and wrath mirrored upon his countenance. "Why, the fellow has been living at Beckham, within a stone's throw of our own manor house, for eight or nine months. Mr. Joynson—"

"Yes, that is the name he is using."

"Is reputed in the village to be worth half a million of money, more or less. He is the resource of all the amateur mendicants in the district, figuring as a well-to-do bachelor, he has even dared to make certain proposals for my sister's hand. Amy refused his hand sorely on the ground of disparity of years."

Not solely on that ground, Bernard took leave to hope, in despite of his friend's dogmatism. But he had no word to answer at the moment. And there was excuse for his temporary bewilderment in the presence of so strange and unlooked-for a revelation. In the hour of his darkest despair the fair promise of contingent victory had come.

"What a restless and daring hypocrite the man must be!" Frank continued. "I'll admit I never liked him from the first, but I had no idea of such a sword of Damocles being suspended over his head. Amy has had a lucky escape, and she will think so."

At last Bernard regained his power of utterance.

"I'll go to London now," he said, "apply for a warrant, and acquaint my father with the facts; and then, in company with a police officer, seek out Mr. Joynson at home."

This programme was fulfilled, and success crowned the enterprise. A few weeks later commercial circles were discussing everywhere a new cause celebre, and the strange change of events—as unfolded in the speech of counsel for the prosecution—by which not only had a notorious swindler been immersed in the net of the law, but stolen bonds had found their way back into the coffers of the rightful owners.

But not the least happy result to Bernard Hooker was that he learned from Amy Allerton's own sweet lips that at least one reason beyond that of age had existed for her refusal of Archer Glanning's suit. She had already bestowed her heart upon her brother's friend.

Her hand soon followed. And now Bernard Hooker—a rising and popular barrister—sometimes tells his wife with a smile that on a certain memorable May day he chased a fortune in two senses.

A Parisian Bird Charmer.

The London Pall Mall Gazette thus states the singular powers of a Parisian bird-charmer:

Paris has found a new sensation in a bird-charmer, who has been astonishing the boulevardiers with his powers. A bet was made between him and a M. Loizey, a gentleman who was very skeptical in such matters. The conditions were that M. Loizey should furnish a dozen birds, which were to be at the disposal of the charmer for fifteen minutes. At the end of that time M. Picard was to open the cage which contained them and each bird was to alight upon a certain arbutus, brought upon the ground by him and placed at a distance of 100 metres from the point where they were liberated. For each bird which did not obey the charm within a quarter of an hour M. Picard was to pay M. Loizey fifty francs, and for each bird which did M. Loizey was to pay M. Picard the same sum. When the time for the test arrived so large and so curious a crowd had gathered on the Champs de Mars that it was impossible to maintain the needful space of 100 metres around the spot where the cage was placed. Forty metres was all the distance that could be secured. The results, therefore, were not accepted as determining the bet, and another trial will be made. The birds, however—released under these conditions—flew, one by one, to the arbutus and perched on its branches, to the great astonishment of the spectators. M. Picard's charm consists, it is believed, in impregnating these branches with a colorless and mysterious liquid, the secret of which is as yet his own.

In Chicago, during a quarrel, Clement Ludes-kemp, a young German, shot and instantly killed his mistress, and then blew out his own brains, dying in a few minutes. The girl's real name was Ada Harvey. She came from Racine, Wis.

General Condensations.

The existing craze for highly colored houses consisting almost entirely of chimneys and roof will probably soon die out. There are symptoms that the public is becoming wearied of red tiling and dormers, and that inmates of "cottages" with every bedroom partly in the roof and every sitting room so low that a man standing on tip-toe can almost touch the ceiling, are sighing for lofty parlors and airy bedrooms. In those modern monstrosities which are considered old English because they do not fulfill the requirements of English-speaking people of the present day it is considered a beauty to be ugly.

The latest novelty in the show business is an exhibition of noses, which has recently been held in Austria. Eighty persons competed for the prize offered for the most extraordinary nasal protuberance in form, size and color. It was awarded to a competitor from Vienna, who is the possessor of what is said to be a gigantic nose of deep violet blue. If this novelty should become popular in this country, the dime museums would not be large enough to hold the Democrats who would be put on exhibition.

In Nevada there are hundreds of artesian wells, averaging less than 200 feet deep, and costing, in cluding boring and piping, less than \$500. Each of them will flow 50,000 gallons of water a day, and will irrigate five acres of ploughed or fifty acres of meadow land. All the wells are on the top of the bed-rock, and there is shown to be a stratum of water underlying the whole State. The water from the wells is quite cold in the summer and very warm in winter, never freezing, making it very desirable for stock men in feeding their stock for market, as cattle seem to relish it and thrive well on it.

The following extraordinary circular, which has recently been issued at St. Petersburg by the department of roads and communications, curiously illustrates the reverence with which the czar and all his belongings are regarded by all good Russians. "The owners of passenger steamers who have been granted permission to name their vessels in the names of the imperial family are bound to keep their boats in excellent order and repair. If, however, any such named steamer, consequent upon commercial operations, should be employed in any manner likely to make the carrying out of the above instructions difficult, the owners are hereby notified that they must rename the vessel and declare this change of name to the inspector of marine."

A Florida pilot tells big stories of the sharks which abound in the sea between Pensacola and Fort Pickens, and the unfortunate sailors and soldiers they have eaten. "I'd just as soon try to swim a lake of red hot pitch as to swim over from Pensacola to Fort Pickens." The sharks would be sure to get him. "I've seen 'em moving around on the bottom like a drove of hogs. They generally swim slowly when not chased, but they can work up a tremendous race when they are chased, and I've seen one jump twenty feet into the air." He further remarked: "Some time ago a Spanish gunboat dropped in there and the officers amused themselves with shark fishing. They had quite a circus. They would take a small dynamite cartridge, bind a piece of pork to it and fix it to a float and wire and send it 200 feet astern, pretty soon a shark would take it and they would fire, and the fish would fly into a thousand pieces. If one was wounded the others went for him and ate him up."

A somewhat sensational incident marked one of the performances, the other day, at the Cape Menagerie at St. Etienne, near Paris. Agop, the well-known trainer, had scarcely entered the cage of one of the tigers when the ferocious brute sprang upon him and began worrying him tooth and claw. The audience screamed with horror, and a general rush for the door of the tent began. Agop, however, kept cool, and in spite of some fearful lacerations all over the body and great loss of blood fought with such determination that he finally overcame the tiger, which crouched at his feet. Not content with this victory Agop was foolhardy enough to force it through its usual exercise, to the wonderment and admiration of the crowd who had stopped momentarily in their flight. The tamer then left the cage; and all torn and bleeding as he was, proceeded to that containing a lioness—which had formerly made a meal of Pernet, one of his predecessors in the perilous situation. He entered the cage totally unarmed, and succeeded in putting the lioness through her habitual jumps, after which he left the cage—this time at least. Agop then had his wounds dressed.

According to its recent report, the Bibliotheque Nationale, the famous French national library at Paris, still keeps at the head of the great collections of books in the world. The number of volumes reaches 2,500,000; bound or stitched manuscripts number 92,000, and the medals of all periods 144,000. The collection of engravings contains more than 2,000,000 prints, included in 14,500 volumes and 4,000 portfolios. Eighty thousand volumes of the most valuable works are kept in a special collection. During 1883, 70,000 readers availed themselves of the privileges of the library.

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