How Herman Corning Paid the Price

By HOMER FISK

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HERMAN CORNING made up his mind when a mere boy that he would become a successful business man and the possessor of great riches. From his earliest memory he had hated the narrow village life and the cramped home existence, where every penny had to be watched in order to make both ends meet. He dreamed of great establishments with hundreds of busy workers, all pliable to his will, as expressed from the inner office. He dreamed of meeting the greatest and most powerful men of affairs and dictating terms or forcing them to compromise with him.

Among all his playmates at school but one sympathized with his ambitions or believed in him. That one was Hannah Curtin, the grave-eyed girl with the high forehead, who always stood at the head of her class. All the rest derided him.

"I believe you will succeed, Herman," said she, seriously, "and when you do I will marry you."

"Will you?" asked Herman, eagerly. And then he added with a stubborn set of his square jaw, "You may have to wait a long time, Hannah, because if I don't succeed at first I will keep on trying."

So the compact was sealed and one fine day, when Herman was 15, he fulfilled the worst prophesies of the village gossips by going away to the great city. He was able to scrape together barely money enough to get him there but he feared nothing. He had heard the expression "merchant prince" and it attracted his imagination. He resolved to enter mercantile life.

Upon reaching the city he went directly to the biggest wholesale house in the city, Hope, Norris & Co., and sturdily walked into the office of the head of the concern.

He was a trifle perturbed at the vastness of the institution and the cool[illegible]

business that was the wonder of all the country about. The town had only 15,000 inhabitants and Herman chafed at the limitations. He found a purchaser at a fancy price, and at 23 went back to the city with $10,000 in his pocket.

He then started a jobbing business in a small way and by his indefatigable energy and application began to make inroads in the business of the larger houses. He did well from the first, but his resources were so limited that he could not move fast enough to suit his ardent spirit. Then Norris, Hope's partner, died and Hope sent for him.

"Corning, you are a wonder," he said. "I need such a man as you. Besides you are cutting into our business. I will take you in and sell you a quarter interest, at whatever the business inventories, take over your stock at what it inventories as part payment and your note for the balance. You can pay out of the profits. You can handle the business as manager and I will look after the finances."

This was a great lift, but it only fed Corning's ambition. Still he was not a dominating factor in the business world and he found after a year or so that he must remain subordinate to Hope, whose conservative methods drove him to distraction. He wanted to lead, Hope was content to run along smoothly on the old lines. Besides he was not making money fast enough to suit him. To be sure his share of the yearly profits ran way up in the thousands, but he could not see how he ever could become a power in the financial world at the rate he was going.

While he was struggling with these problem's, Hope's health failed. Knowing Corning's daring disposition he did not dare go away, as the physicians ordered, and leave the young man in charge of the entire business. Finally, threatened with death, he offered to sell his interest at a very reasonable sum if Corning could find a backer. While the sum was reasonable considering the value of the business, it was a vast amount for a young man to raise. All of Corning's profits had gone into paying for his quarter interest.

In the meantime Corning had made one or two social connections. One was Peter Holdbrook, a wealthy retail merchant, with whom he had come into business relations and, who, had admired the young man for his business talent. He had invited Corning to his home several times and had presented his daughter, a frail, rather pretty girl, whose strength of character, if she ever had any, had been eliminated by her father's dominant methods.

Just about this time Peter Holdbrook died and his daughter had called on Herman for advice, knowing that her father had trusted him. The girl was the sole relative and heir and the responsibility of the great estate frightened her.

To Herman came a great inspiration. He would marry this pale-faced girl, who would be putty in his hands. This would give him money enough to buy out Hope, besides making him master of the great Holdbrook store. He would combine the two businesses and make himself the greatest factor in the business world. There was a sincere pang in the thought of Hannah, because, besides having a real affection for her, Herman had made her a part of his scheme of life and his nature revolted at changing his plans. But he saw no other way and within two months he had married Lillian Holdbrook, and within after became absolute master of the great stores, one wholesale and one retail.

The rest the business world knows well—how he reversed the old policies and struck out into new methods with daring which stunned all observers; how the business grew until Herman Corning was recognized the world over as one of the greatest merchant princes; how he branched into other lines of business and finance until his name was on the directorates of many banks and corporations and his real estate holdings became the despair of assessors.

When Herman Corning was 35 his wife died. A few months later he went back to his old town for the first time since he left it. He found Hannah Curtin still unmarried. To her he told the story of his success and the reason for his marriage. He told her it had been without sentiment, as his heart belonged to her—but had been necessary in order to achieve success.

"I knew you would come back," said Hannah, quietly. "That is why I never married. Men must work and women must wait."

Just a year and a day after the death of his first wife Herman Corning and Hannah Curtin were married. It is to be presumed they lived happy ever afterward. If not, nobody else knew it.

Nan did not reply, but stirred the potatoes vigorously.

Presently Jim arose and going into the kitchen sat down on the edge of the table. His forehead was furrowed with deep lines of care and anxiety.

"Nan," he said, after a long silence, "the boys at the mills want me to run for constable. They say they'll all vote for me and that I'm sure to be elected."

Nan looked up suddenly.

"For constable?" she asked. "Why, Jim."

"And why not, Nannie?" he asked. "It pays about $1,200 a year, and it's worth having. Thing what we could do with $1,200 a year for two years, anyhow, Nan."

"I know," she answered, "but—but I'm afraid, Jamie."

"Afraid?" he demanded.

"I don't know anything about politics," she said, "and I'm afraid you might be defeated, and that would hurt—would make you feel more discouraged than ever, wouldn't it?"

"But I can't be defeated," he replied. "All I need is the nomination, you know. Our party's in the majority and—and if I'm nominated, why that settles it, don't you see?"

"But are you sure of being nominated?" she asked, looking at him with hopeful eyes.

"The boys in the mills are for me to a man. Of course they are not all the party, but they are willing to work for me, and that would be a big start, don't you see?"

He grew enthusiastic and some of his enthusiasm was imparted to his wife.

"Oh, wouldn't it be nice if you could be elected," she said, pausing in her work to look at him proudly. Some called Jim Paxton shiftless, but to Nan he was always her big, true-hearted, unfortunate Jamie. "Twelve hundred—why that's a hundred dollars a month! Perhaps—we could buy a little home—Jamie."

"And you could have some new dresses and a new hat and—and there wouldn't be anything I wouldn't get for you, Nannie."

He had left the table and was pacing the floor, nervously.

"And I can get the nomination, too," he continued; "I can get it, I tell you. I'm sure of all the laboring men's votes, and all I need is—is—" He paused and his face clouded.

"It what, Jamie?"

"Is something I haven't got—something I can't get, Nannie," he said, gloomily.

He sighed and the old look of discouragement came into his face.

"It's this way," he said, after a moment, seeing the unspoken question in her eyes, "I'd have to have more than just the labor vote, Nan. I'd have to make a canvass—that is, I'd have to see every voter in our party and I'd have to have two or three other fellows help me to get others to vote for me. Of course these fellows would have to be paid, and then there'd be other expenses—quite a lot of other expenses, and—it would cost considerable. But I ain't got any money, Nan."

(concluded next week.)

Nan's Hundred Dollars

By EDGAR WELTON COOLEY

(Copyright, 1904, by Daily Story Pub. Co.)

FOR the second time Nan Paxton, sitting upon the edge of a chair, took the contents from the big official envelope, read the letter and smoothed upon her knee the piece of blue paper that accompanied it.

When she had finished she sank upon the floor and cried.

A hundred dollars! A small amount to be her entire share of a relative's estate; but a large amount to Nan—the most she had ever had at one time during the 23 years of her life. How many things for her home—her and Jim's home—she could procure with that! Jim had been out of work for a month and the rent was due and there were the grocer and the butcher to pay. But, perhaps she could have a new carpet for the parlor—she had wanted one so long—and a few new dishes for the table. How surprised and pleased Jim would be—dear old Jamie!

With a happy laugh that dried her tears, Nan finally thrust the letter in a bureau drawer and returned to the kitchen, where her preparations for dinner had been interrupted by the postman's visit.

Then Jim came home—poor, patient, discouraged Jim, with his coarse clothes, his worn shoes and the pathetic stoop to his shoulders.

He came in quietly and taking a seat by the window, gazed at the wall in solemn silence. Nan thought at first to run to him and tell him of her good fortune, then decided to serve the surprise as desert to his dinner.

"What luck, Jamie?" she asked, stirring the frying potatoes with a case-knife.

"None at all," he answered, soberly. "Don't seem to be a vacancy anywhere, Nannie. I've been clear out to Walsworth's, but he ain't needin' any one just now. Says he had to lay off two men Saturday. Times are gettin' dull, he says, and he has to cut expenses."

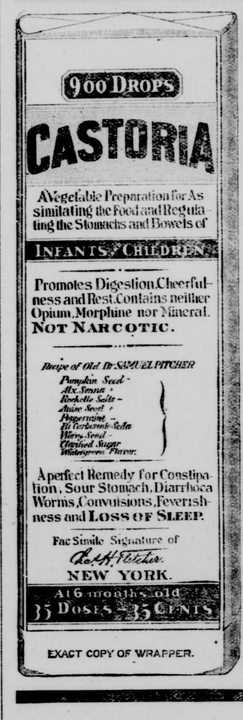
"What are you going to do?" asked the merchant.

"Peddle," replied Herman sententiously, "until I can make enough to buy a store."

"Oh, come now, you are doing better than any young man we have ever had," expostulated Hope. "Don't make a fool of yourself. You will be head of a department in a few years."

"Thank you, sir," replied Herman, "I wouldn't stay for a job as general manager. I am going in for myself. I have learned all I can as a subordinate."

And that was all there was to it. Herman started out with his wagon. He made good selections of merchandise and his sales were beyond his hopes. Within two years he had piled up $3,000. Then he ran across a store in a small town which was for sale. The owner had made a failure, but Herman thought he saw why. He bought it, paying part down. In two years he was out of debt and doing a



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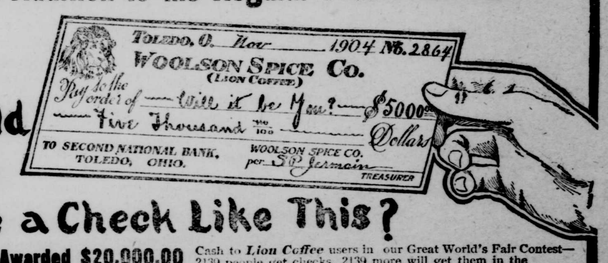
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12 35	5 05	lv Wash'ton ar	1 30	8 15
1 40	6 35	Baltimore	11 25	7 05
3 00	7 40	Philadelphia	10 25	5 41
3 40	8 25	Wilmington	10 05	5 00
4 58	9 43	Clayton	8 40	3 42
5 07	9 52	Kenton	8 32	3 34
5 16	f 10 01	Hartley	f 8 23	3 25
f 5 18	f 10 03	Slaughter	f 8 21	3 23
f 5 23	10 10	Marydel	8 14	3 16
5 31	f 10 16	Henderson	f 8 08	3 10
f 5 37	f 10 23	Goldsboro	f 8 02	f 3 04
f 5 46	10 31	Greensboro	7 53	2 55
5 55	10 40	Ridgely	7 44	2 46
6 03	10 48	Queen Anne	7 35	2 37
f 6 12	f 10 57	Cordova	f 7 26	2 28
f 6 18	f 11 03	Chapel	f 7 20	2 22
6 30	11 15	Easton	7 11	2 13
f 6 38	f 11 23	Llandaff	f 6 59	f 2 01
f 6 44	f 11 29	Trappe	f 6 51	f 1 56
6 53	11 38	ar. Oxford lv	6 45	1 47
P. M	A. M.		A. M	P. M

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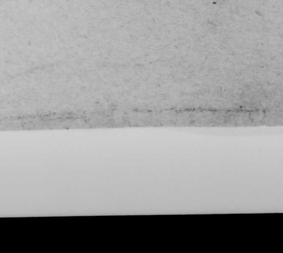
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