

Missions," says Brother Jones, 'an', wa'al,' I says to Tenaker, 'that's what I done to Staples.'"

"Did Mr. Tenaker see the point?" asked John, laughing.

"He laughed a little," said David, "but didn't quite ketch on till I told him about the subscription paper, an' then he like to split."

"Suppose Staples had taken you up," suggested John.

"Wa'al," said David, "I didn't think I was takin' many chances. If, in the fust place, I hadn't knowed Staples as well 's I did, the Smith fam'ly, so fur 's my experience goes, has got more members 'n any other fam'ly on top of the earth." At this point a boy brought in a telegram. David opened it, gave a side glance at his companion, and, taking out his pocketbook, put the dispatch therein.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE next morning David called John into the rear room. "Busy?" he asked.

"No," said John. "Nothing that can't wait."

"Set down," said Mr. Harum, drawing a chair to the fire. He looked up with his characteristic grin. "Ever own a hog?" he said.

"No," said John, smiling.

"Ever feel like ownin' one?"

"I don't remember ever having any cravings in that direction."

"Like pork?" asked Mr. Harum.

"In moderation," was the reply. David produced from his pocketbook the dispatch received the day before and handed it to the young man at his side. "Read that," he said.

John looked at it and handed it back.

"It doesn't convey any idea to my mind," he said.

"What?" said David, "you don't know what 'Bangs Galilee' means? nor who 'Raisin' is?"

"You'll have to ask me an easier one," said John, smiling.

David sat for a moment in silence, and then, "How much money have you got?" he asked.

"Well," was the reply, "with what I had and what I have saved since I came I could get together about five thousand dollars, I think."

"Is it where you c'n put your hands on't?"

John took some slips of paper from his pocketbook and handed them to David.

"H'm, h'm," said the latter. "Wa'al, I owe ye quite a little bunch o' money, don't I? Forty-five hunderd! Wa'al! Couldn't you 'a' done better 'n to keep this here at four per cent?"

"Well," said John, "perhaps so, and perhaps not. I preferred to do this at all events."

"Thought the old man was *safe* anyway, didn't ye?" said David in a tone which showed that he was highly pleased.

"Yes," said John.

"Is this all?" asked David.

"There is some interest on those certificates, and I have some balance in my account," was the reply; "and then, you know, I have some very valuable securities—a beautiful line of mining stocks, and that promising Pennsylvania property."

At the mention of the last-named asset David looked at him for an instant as if about to speak, but if so he changed his mind. He sat for a moment fingering the yellow paper which carried the mystic words. Presently he said, opening the message out, "That's from an old friend of mine out to Chicago. He come from this part of the country, an' we was young fellers together thirty years ago. I've had a good many deals with him and through him, an' he never give me a wrong steer, fur 's I know. That is, I never done as he told me without comin' out all right, though he's give me a good many pointers I never did nothin' about. 'Tain't nec'sary to name no names, but 'Bangs Galilee' means 'buy pork,' an' as I've ben watchin' the market fer

quite a spell myself, an' standard pork 's a good deal lower 'n it costs to pack it, I've made up my mind to buy a few thousan' barrels fer fam'ly use. It's a handy thing to have in the house," declared Mr. Harum, "an' I thought mebbe it wouldn't be a bad thing fer you to have a little. It looks cheap to me," he added, "an' mebbe bime-by what you don't eat you c'n sell."

"Well," said John, laughing, "you see me at table every day and know what my appetite is like. How much pork do you think I could take care of?"

"Wa'al, at the present price," said David, "I think about four thousan' barrels would give ye enough to eat fer a spell, an' mebbe leave ye a few barrels to dispose of if you should happen to strike a feller later on that wanted it wuss 'n you did."

John opened his eyes a little. "I should only have a margin of a dollar and a quarter," he said.

"Wa'al, I've got a notion that that'll carry ye," said David. "It may go lower 'n what it is now. I never bought anythin' yet that didn't drop some, an' I guess nobody but a fool ever did buy at the bottom more'n once; but I've had an idee for some time that it was about bottom, an' this here telegraph wouldn't 'a' ben sent if the feller that sent it didn't think so too, an' I've had some other cor'spondence with him." Mr. Harum paused and laughed a little.

"I was jest thinkin'," he continued, "of what the Irishman said about Stofford. Never ben there, have ye? Wa'al, it's a place eight nine mile f'm here, an' the hills 'round are so steep that when you're goin' up you c'n look right

back under the buggy by jest leanin' over the edge of the dash. I was drivin' 'round there once, an' I met an Irishman with a big drove o' hogs.

"Hello, Pat!" I says, 'where 'd all them hogs come from?'

"Stofford," he says.

"Wa'al," I says, 'I wouldn't 'a' thought the' was so many hogs in Stofford.'

"Oh, be gobs!" he says, 'sure they're *all* hogs in Stofford;' an'," declared David, "the bears ben sellin' that pork up in Chicago as if the hull everlastin' West was *all* hogs."

"It's very tempting," said John thoughtfully.

"Wa'al," said David, "I don't want to tempt ye exac'ly, an' certain I don't want to urge ye. The' ain't no sure things but death an' taxes, as the sayin' is, but buyin' pork at these prices is buyin' somethin' that's got value, an' you can't wipe it out. In other words, it's buyin' a warranted article at a price consid'ably lower 'n it c'n be produced for, an' though it may go lower, if a man c'n *stick*, it's bound to level up in the long run."

Our friend sat for some minutes apparently looking into the fire, but he was not conscious of seeing anything at all. Finally he rose, went over to Mr. Harum's desk, figured the interest on the certificates up to the first of January, indorsed them, and filling up a check for the balance of the amount in question, handed the check and certificate to David.

"Think you'll go it, eh?" said the latter.

"Yes," said John; "but if I take the quantity you suggest, I shall have nothing to remar-

gin the trade in case the market goes below a certain point."

"I've thought of that," replied David, "an' was goin' to say to you that I'd carry the trade down as fur as your money would go, in case more margins had to be called."

"Very well," said John. "And will you look after the whole matter for me?"

"All right," said David.

John thanked him and returned to the front room.

There were times in the months which followed when our friend had reason to wish that all swine had perished with those whom Shylock said "your prophet the Nazarite conjured the devil into;" and the news of the world in general was of secondary importance compared with the market reports. After the purchase pork dropped off a little, and hung about the lower figure for some time. Then it began to advance by degrees until the quotation was a dollar above the purchase price.

John's impulse was to sell, but David made no sign. The market held firm for a while, even going a little higher. Then it began to drop rather more rapidly than it had advanced, to about what the pork had cost, and for a long period fluctuated only a few cents one way or the other. This was followed by a steady decline to the extent of half-a-dollar, and, as the reports came, it "looked like going lower," which it did. In fact, there came a day when it was so "low," and so much more "looked like going lower" than ever (as such things usually do when the "bottom" is pretty nearly reached), that our

friend had not the courage to examine the market reports for the next two days, and simply tried to keep the subject out of his mind. On the morning of the third day the *Syrchester* paper was brought in about ten o'clock, as usual, and laid on Mr. Harum's desk. John shivered a little, and for some time refrained from looking at it. At last, more by impulse than intention, he went into the back room and glanced at the first page without taking the paper in his hands. One of the press dispatches was headed: "Great Excitement on Chicago Board of Trade: Pork Market reported Cornered: Bears on the Run," and more of the same sort, which struck our friend as being the most profitable, instructive, and delightful literature that he had ever come across. David had been in *Syrchester* the two days previous, returning the evening before. Just then he came into the office, and John handed him the paper.

"Wa'al," he said, holding it off at arm's length, and then putting on his glasses, "them fellers that thought they was *all* hogs up West, are havin' a change of heart, are they? I reckoned they would 'fore they got through with it. It's ben rather a long pull, though, eh?" he said, looking at John with a grin.

"Yes," said our friend, with a slight shrug of the shoulders.

"Things looked rather colicky the last two three days, eh?" suggested David. "Did you think 'the jig was up an' the monkey was in the box?'"

"Rather," said John. "The fact is," he admitted, "I am ashamed to say that for a few days back I haven't looked at a quotation. I suppose

you must have carried me to some extent. How much was it?"

"Wa'al," said David, "I kept the trade margined, of course, an' if we'd sold out at the bottom you'd have owed me somewhere along a thousan' or fifteen hunderd; but," he added, "it was only in the slump, an' didn't last long, an' anyway I cal'lated to carry that pork to where it would 'a' ketched fire. I wa'n't worried none, an' you didn't let on to be, an' so I didn't say anythin'."

"What do you think about it now?" asked John.

"My opinion is now," replied Mr. Harum, "that it's goin' to putty near where it belongs, an' mebbe higher, an' them 's my advices. We can sell now at some profit, an' of course the bears 'll jump on agin as it goes up, an' the other fellers 'll take the profits f'm time to time. If I was where I could watch the market, I'd mebbe try to make a turn in 't 'casionally, but I guess as 't is we'd better set down an' let her take her own gait. I don't mean to try an' git the top price—I'm alwus willin' to let the other feller make a little—but we've waited fer quite a spell, an' as it's goin' our way, we might 's well wait a little longer."

"All right," said John, "and I'm very much obliged to you."

"Sho, sho!" said David.

It was not until August, however, that the deal was finally closed out.