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W. N. U. DETROIT, 10, 52-1923.

# The Brown Mouse

CHAPTER XIII—Continued.

"Miss Woodruff," replied the professor earnestly, "he has something that looks toward truth, and something we need. Just how far he will go, just what he will amount to, it is impossible to say. But something must be done for the rural schools—something along the lines he is trying to follow. He is a struggling soul, and he is worth helping. You won't make any mistake if you make the most of Mr. Irwin."

Jim slipped out of a side door and fled. He started home on foot as he had come. A mile or so out he was overtaken by the colonel, driving briskly along with room for his buggy for Jim.

"I'm glad to see you," said Jim. "They're looking fine," said Jim. "There is a good deal to say when ever two horse lovers get together. But when Jim had finished his own story, he was looking at what had been in his mind all the time."

"I saw Bonner and Haakon and Ed doing some caucusing today," said he. "They expect to elect Bonner to the board again."

"Oh, I suppose so," replied Jim. "Well, what shall we do about it?" asked the colonel.

Jim was silent. Here was a matter, one which had no idea except the broad and general one—that truth is mighty and shall prevail—but that the speed of its forward march is problematical.

"I think," said the colonel, "that it's up to you to see that the people have a chance to decide. It's really Bonner against Jim Irwin."

"What you need is a man to take that office away from Bonner," said Jim. "I'm free to say I don't know that this is a job, but I'm willing to try. I think that in about a week I shall pass the word around that I'd like to serve my country on the school board."

"Jim's face lighted up—and then darkened. "Even then they'd be two to one, Colonel."

"Maybe," replied the colonel, "and maybe not. That would have to be figured on. A cracked lot splits easy."

"Anyhow," Jim went on, "what's the use? I shouldn't be disturbed this year—and after that—what's the use?"

"Why, Jim," said the colonel, "you aren't getting short of breath are you? I thought you good for the mile, and you aren't turning out a quarter horse, are you? I don't know what all it is you want to do, but I don't believe you can do it in nine months, can you?"

"Not in nine years!" replied Jim. "Well, then, let's plan for ten years," said the colonel. "I don't going to be a reformer in any line of life or a temporary job. Will you stick if we can swing the thing for you?"

"I will," said Jim, in a manner of a person taking the vows in some solemn initiation.

"All right," said the colonel, "We'll keep quiet and see how many votes we can muster up at the election. How many can you speak for?"

By HERBERT QUICK

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you off, that it costs nine dollars to send a postcard to me."

"I think we'll have the shooting on the sloop in a few days," said Newton. "Humph!" scoffed Pete. "I give you my word, if I hadn't promised the colonel I'd stay with him another year, I'd take a slide-door Pullman for the Sand Hills of Nebraska or the Devil's Lake country tomorrow—if I had a gun."

"If it wasn't for a pair of things that kept me here," said Raymond, "I'd like to go, too."

"The colonel," said Pete, "needs me. He needs me in the election tomorrow. What's the matter of your own man, Newt? What for does he vote for Bonner, and throw down an old neighbor?"

"I can't do anything with him!" exclaimed Newton irritably. "He's all tangled up with Bonner and Haakon."

"Well," said Pete, "if he'd just stay at home it would help some. If he votes for Bonner, I'll be just about a stand-off."

"He never misses a vote!" said Newton despairingly. "Can't you cripple him some way?" asked Pete facetiously. "Darned funny when a boy of your age can't control his father's vote! So long!"

"I wish I could," grumbled Newton. "I wish I could! We know a lot more about the school, and Jim Irwin isn't a good teacher than dad does and we can't vote. Why can't I vote when they are interested in an election, and know about the issues. It's granny that you and I won't vote."

"I reckon," said Raymond, the conservative, "that the old-time people that fixed it in the past, knowed it. 'Blessed' answered Newton, the iconoclast. "Why, Calista knows more about the election of school director than dad knows."

"That don't seem reasonable," protested Raymond. "She's prejudiced. I reckon, in favor of Mr. Jim Irwin."

"Well, dad's prejudiced against him—or, no, he isn't either. He likes Jim. He's just prejudiced against giving up his old notions. No, he hadn't neither—I guess he's only prejudiced against seeming to give up some old notions he seemed to have once! And the kids in school would be prejudiced right, anyhow!"

"Paw says he'll be on hand prompt," said Raymond. "But he has to be persuaded right much. Paw's proud—and he can't read."

"Sometimes I think the more people read the less sense they've got," said Newton. "I wish I could be dad up! I wish I could get snick, and make him go for the doctor!"

The boys crossed the ridge to the wooded valley in which nestled the Simms cabin. They found Mrs. Simms greatly exercised in her mind because young McGeechee had been found playing with some blue vitriol used by Raymond in his school work on the treatment of seed potatoes for scab.

"His hands was all blue with it," said she. "You reckon, Mr. Newton, that I'll give him?"

"Did he swallow any of it?" asked Newton. "Nah!" said McGeechee scornfully. Newton reassured Mrs. Simms, and went away. He had been found playing with some blue vitriol used by Raymond in his school work on the treatment of seed potatoes for scab.

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