

Cap'n Warren's Wards

by JOSEPH C. LINCOLN

Copyright, 1911, by D. Appleton & Co.

CHAPTER XIV.—Continued.

—15—

Yes. Precisely. And there were many just as valuable. But we have been gradually getting those out of the way and listing and appraising the remainder. It was a tangle. Your brother's business methods, especially of late years, were decidedly unsatisfactory and slipshod. It may have been the condition of his health which prompted his attending to his business. On the other side, it is slightly to say may have been that he was getting in great trouble and financial distress. At all events, the task had been a hard one for us. But, largely owing to Gravé's and his patient work, our report was practically ready a month ago.

He paused. Captain Ellisha, who had been listening attentively, nodded.

Yes? he said; "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"What the final sum, Mr. Gravé?"

"The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

Sylvester repeated his statement. "He got the concession by paying \$20,000 to the government of Brazil" he continued. "To raise the \$20,000 he formed a stock company of 250 shares at \$100 each. One hundred of these shares were in his own name. Fifty more in the name of one Thomas A. Craven," his clerk at that time, his office. "Craven was the only dummy, however. Do you understand what I mean by a dummy?"

"I can guess. Sort of a wooden image that moves when Bijo pulls the strings. Yes, yes! I understand well enough. Go ahead; go ahead!"

"That's it. The fifty shares were in Craven's name, but they were transferred in blank and in Mr. Warren's name. Together with his own hundred they gave him control and a voting majority. That much we know, by the records."

"See. But this rubber concession wasn't really worth anything, was it?"

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight in Bijo's book—something's his done that's all right, to speak plain, that's crooked."

"I'm afraid there's no doubt of it."

"Humph!" The captain frowned.

His cigar had gone out, and he idly twisted the stamp between his fingers.

"Well," he said, with a sigh, "our family, generally speakin', has always held his head pretty high. Dad was poor, but he prided himself on 'em straight as a plumb line. And, as for mother, she! * * * Then, lookin' up quickly, he asked, "Does anybody outside know about that?"

"No one but ourselves—yet."

"'Ket! Is it goin' to be necessary for somebody else to know it?"

"We hope not. But there is a point—"

"I was thinkin' about the children."

"'Course, So are we all!"

"Tim! Poor Caroline! She put her father on a sort of altar and bowed down before him as you might say. Any sort of disgrace to his name would kill her. As for me," with another sigh, "I ain't so much surprised as you might think. I know that sounds tough, but say when a mother sees her boy, she's bound to be afraid all along."

Bijo always steered pretty close to the edge of the channel. He had ideas about honesty and fair dealing in business that didn't jibe with mine. We split on just that, as I told you, Mr. Gravé, when you and I first met. He got some South Deborho folk to invest money along with him—sort of devil's account, they figured it out—but I found out he had used it to speculate in oil. So that's why we got our row. I took pains to see that the money was paid back, but he and I never spoke afterward. Fur as my own money was concerned, I hadn't any kick, but * * * However, I'm talkin' too much. Go on, Sylvester, I ready to hear whatever you've got to say."

"Thank you, captain. You make it easier for me."

"It seems that your brother's first step toward wealth and success was taken about nineteen years ago. Then somehow or another, probably through a combination of luck and shrewdness, he obtained a great concession from the Brazilian government, the long term lease of a good sized tract of land on the upper Amazon. It was very valuable because of its rubber trees."

"'Hoy! Captain Ellisha leaned forward. "Say that again!" he commanded sharply."

"Well," he said, "you told me 'twas. What do you think about that?"

"Never mind that now, Gravé," interrupted Kuhn. "The amount, roughly speaking, is close to our original estimate, half a million."

The captain drew a breath of relief. "Well," he said, "I think that's all right, far as it goes."

"Humph! Well, I call that I could make it go to the end of the route and then have enough left for a return ticket. Say," with another look at the solemn faces of the three, "what the row? If the estate is worth half a million what's the matter with it?"

"That is what we are here this morning to discuss, captain. A month ago, as I said, we considered our report prepared, and the first thing that happened on the trail of something which upon investigation upset all our calculations. It true it threatened, not to mention its effect upon the estate, to prove so distressing and painful to us, Rodgers Warren's friends and legal advisers, that we decided not to inform his brother, by disclosing our secret to him, we were sure that there was no mistake, 'I did drop you a hint, you will remember'."

"I remember. Now we're comin' to the rock!"

Sylvester was evidently disturbed.

Captain Ellisha, regarding him intently.

"I judge it's sort of hard for you to go on, Mr. Sylvester," he said. "I'll help you here. You and Mr. Kuhn and Mr. Gravé have found out something that ain't exactly straight