

JOHN RAWN

PROMINENT CITIZEN

By EMERSON HOUGH

AUTHOR of THE MISSISSIPPI BUBBLE; 54-40 OR FIGHT

ILLUSTRATIONS by Ray Walters

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SYNOPSIS.

CHAPTER I—John Rawn is born in Texas. Early in life he shows signs of masterfulness and inordinate selfishness.

CHAPTER II—He marries Laura Johnson. He is a clerk in a St. Louis railway office when his daughter Grace is born. Years later he hears Grace's lover, a young engineer named Charles Halsey, speak of a scheme to utilize the lost current of electricity. With his usual unscrupulousness he appropriates the idea to his own and induces Halsey to perfect an experimental machine. He forms a company, with himself as president, at a salary of \$100,000 a year, and Halsey as superintendent of the works at a salary of \$5,000.

CHAPTER III—Rawn takes charge of the office in Chicago, Virginia Delaware, a beautiful, capable and ambitious young woman, is assigned as his stenographer. She assists in picking the furniture and decoration for the princely mansion Rawn has erected. Mrs. Rawn feels out of place in the new surroundings.

CHAPTER IV—Halsey goes to New York with Rawn and Miss Delaware to explain delays in perfecting the new motor to the impatient directors. He gets a message that a deformed daughter has been born to his wife, Grace Rawn. He returns to Chicago.

CHAPTER V—Rawn bargains with Miss Delaware to wear his jewelry and appear in public with him, as a means to help him in a business way.

CHAPTER VI—Rawn is fortunate in market speculations, piles up wealth and attains prominence.

CHAPTER VII—He frets because his wife does not rise with him in a social way. He gives her a million dollars to leave him.

CHAPTER VIII—Grace moves to Graystone Hall, and Halsey continues to live in the cottage near the works.

CHAPTER IX—Halsey's machine proves a success, but he keeps the fact a secret.

CHAPTER X—Virginia Delaware becomes more and more indispensable to Rawn. He takes her to New York on a business trip. Idle talk prompts him to offer her marriage.

CHAPTER XI—They are married. Through Virginia's tact and ability they make a place for themselves in the social world.

CHAPTER XII—Halsey threatens to get a divorce because his wife refuses to return to him. He tells Rawn that he has broken up all the machines after proving the success of the invention. Rawn, in a great rage, threatens to kill him.

CHAPTER XIV.

The Step-Mother-in-Law.

On this very beautiful evening, in this very beautiful scene—as beautiful as any to be found in all that luxurious portion of a great city representing the flower of a great country's civilization—Graystone Hall was a double stage. At the back of the tall, mansion house countless auto-cars passed in brilliant procession, carrying countless men and women, personal evidences of all the ease and luxury that wealth can bring; and of these who passed, the most part looked in with envy at the tall mansion house beyond the curving lines of shrubbery, brilliantly illuminated now, the picture of beauty and ease, of peace and content. More than one soft-voiced woman murmured, "Beautiful!" as she passed. More than one man, more than one woman, envied the owners of this palace.

"He's awfully gone on his wife, they say," commented one young matron, much as many did. "Not that I see much in her myself—although she seems to have a sort of way about her, after all."

"Lucky beggar!" growled her husband.

"Yes, they're both lucky." That both Mr. and Mrs. Rawn were lucky seemed to be the consensus of opinion of the procession of those passing at this moment along the great driveway, and hence looking upon the rear stage of the drama then in progress. But they saw no drama. The evening was beautiful. The spot was one of great beauty. Apparently all was peace and content. There was no drama visible, only a stage set for a scene of happiness.

Yet, two hundred yards from the point of this belief, on the stage of the dimly-lighted gallery facing the lake, the comedy of life and ambition, of success and sorrow, moved briskly; moved, indeed, to its appointed and inevitable end.

Rawn's voice, harsh, half animal in its savagery, awakened some sudden kindred savagery in young Halsey's soul. In a flash the spark rose between steel and flint. The accumulated resentment of many days made tinder enough for Halsey now.

"All right, Mr. Rawn," said he, his head dropping, his chin extended. "Go on with the killing now, if you like. I'm going to tell you right here, that sort of talk will do you no good. If you kill me you kill my secret. It isn't yours, and neither you nor any other man is apt to set it going again."

"You bound, you cur!" half sobbed Rawn. His daughter stood, tense, silent, unnoticed at his elbow.

"Thank you. Now, I'll tell you. I dismantled every motor, and I'm never going to build them again for you. I meant every word of what I said. Also I mean this!"

As he spoke he rose and struck Rawn full in the face with his half-clenched hand. The sound of the blow could have been heard the whole length of the gallery—was so heard.

An instant later, half roaring, John Rawn closed with the younger man.

The women, plucking at their arms, could do nothing to separate the two. Indeed were not noticed in the struggle. As to that, the whole matter was over in an instant. Halsey was far the stronger of the two. He caught the right wrist of Rawn as he smote down clumsily, caught his other wrist in the next instant, and then slowly, by sheer strength, forced him back and down until at last he crowded him into the chair which Grace a moment earlier had vacated. The bony fingers of his hand worked havoc on John Rawn's wrist, on his twisted arm.

Halsey was not so long from his college athletics, where he had been welcome on several teams. He was younger than Rawn, his body was harder from hard work and abstinence. He was the older man's master.

"Sit down!" he panted. "I don't think you'll do this killing very soon!"

Rawn, for the first time in his life, faced a situation which he could not dominate by arrogance and bluster. For the first time in his life he had met another man, body to body, in actual physical encounter; and that man was his master! All at once the consciousness of this flashed through every fiber of him, bodily and mental. He had met a man stronger than himself—yes, stronger both in body and in mind. The consciousness of that latter truth also sank deep into his heart. It was a moment of horror for him. He, John Rawn, master of this place, rich, happy, prosperous—he, John Rawn, beaten—subdued—it could not be! Heaven never would permit that!

They all remained tense, silent, motionless, for just half an instant; it seemed to them a long time. Halsey at length straightened and turned toward the door.

"I'm going," said he dully. "Good by, Grace."

Rawn turned, confused, distracted. He cared for no more of the physical testing of this difference. But he saw Success passing in the reviled figure of his son-in-law. "No, no!" he cried—"Jennie—he fouled me—but don't let him go—he'll ruin us, do you hear?"

Halsey was within the tall glass doors and passing toward the front entry. He heard the rustle of skirts back of him and felt a light hand upon his shoulder.

"Well," he began; and turning, faced young Mrs. Rawn!

"I'm sorry," he stammered, "it's disgraceful. I beg your pardon with all my heart. But I couldn't help it. He struck me first with what he said. He threatened me. Let me go. I'll never come back again. I'm sorry—on your account—"

"Charles," she said softly, "Charley, wait. Where are you going?"

"To the divorce courts, and then to hell."

"But you mustn't go away like this. I'm sorry, too. Wait!"

Suddenly moved by some swift, irresistible impulse, perhaps born of this unregulated scene where all seemingly control seemed set aside, she put both her white, bare arms about his neck and looked full into his eyes, her own eyes bright. He caught her white wrists in his hands; but did not put away her arms. He stood looking at her, frowning, uncertain. His blood flamed.

"It's disgrace," he said. "I admit it. I can't square it any way in the world. I'm sorry on your account—awfully sorry!" His blood flamed, flamed.

"Listen!" she said, panting, eager, her voice with some strange, new, compelling quality in it, foreign to her as to himself. "You mustn't go. You mustn't ruin the future of us all in just a minute of temper. You mustn't ruin yourself, or—me. Besides, there's Grace!"

"Oh, Grace!"

"But she's your wife."

"Not any longer. She's chosen for herself. She left me and would not come back. I'm going now. I'm on my own from this time."

"Why not?" she asked coolly. "But why wreck ruin on us all? You don't stop to think!"

"Yes, it will set him back pretty badly—" Halsey nodded toward the bowed frame of Rawn, dimly visible, in the gallery's shade, through the tall glass doors.

"Yes," she said slowly, "he's my husband, surely."

"Who has given you everything?"

She nodded, her arms still about his neck. "Let me think this out for all of us, Charley. Keep matters as they are until I have time to think—won't you do that much—just that little—for me?"

His hands were still upon her wrists as he looked down upon her from his height, his eyes angry, his face frowning, disturbed. Worn almost to gauntness, tall, sinewy, of a certain distinction in look, as he stood there before her now an ignorant observer might have thought the two lovers, he her

lover, not her stepson, she at the least his younger sister, surely not his mother by mixed marriage.

As they stood thus, Rawn turning, saw them through the tall glass door. His face grew eager. "He's not gone," he whispered hoarsely to his daughter, who stood rigid, close at his arm. "She's got him! By Jove! She's a wonder—my wife, my wife—she'll land him yet—she will!"



Struck Rawn Full in the Face.

"Do you see that?" hissed Grace at last, pointing at the door.

"Do I see it—didn't you hear me? Yes, of course I see it!"

"And you'll allow that, between your wife and my husband?"

"Allow it—wife!—why! damn you, girl, what are you talking about—wives and husbands?—what's that to do with this? There's many a million dollars up now, I tell you, on those two standing there. You make a move now—say a word—and I'll wring your neck, do you hear?" He caught her by the wrist. She sank into a chair, sobbing bleakly.

A moment later the two figures beyond the door stood a trifle apart. The arms of Virginia Rawn dropped from Halsey's neck. She laid a hand upon his arm and, side by side, neither looking out toward the gallery, they drew deeper into the room, behind the shelter of a heavy silken curtain which shut off the view.

It was a beautiful night. The long ladder of the moon lay across the gently rippling lake, which murmured at the foot of Graystone Hall's retaining sea-wall. The scent of flowers was about. It was a scene of peace and beauty and content. John Rawn and his daughter remained upon the gallery for a time.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Beyond the Big Cities.

According to the government reckoning, the United States is divided into three distinct parts, a writer in Richardson's Annual says.

First (because they are most frequently forced on our attention) come the big cities. There are only fifty-one of them, with a population of more than 25,000.

Next come the small town people—those who live in towns of 25,000 down to 2,500. Uncle Sam differentiates these from the 25,000 and more, because they live "nearer the soil." Many of their people are retired farmers or merchants, depending on farm trade, and all are more or less closely influenced by agricultural conditions.

Last, we have the ruralists—the farmers or those directly in touch with agriculture. The last census shows that this class outnumbers the other two combined, totaling nearly fifty-four per cent of the people.

But we will find if we turn to statistics, that these bulk figures are misleading. New York State, for example with its number of cities, has a rural population of only twenty-one per cent, whereas in the central, western, or southern States—the big farming section—the per cent of rural population often runs up over eighty, and sometimes to ninety per cent of the State's people.

Probably three-fourths of our population is either rural or closely allied with rural conditions.

Going to Preach Funeral of Some S. C. Lawmakers.

Greenwood Journal

"When I get rested I am going to preach the funeral of some South Carolina lawmakers," said Senator B. R. Tillman this morning.

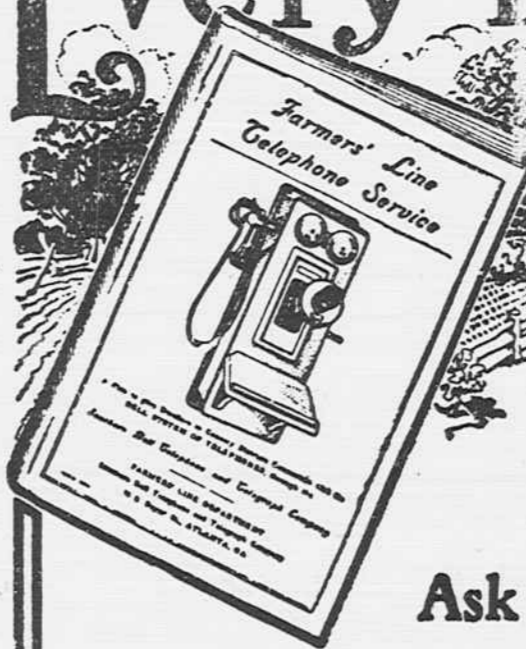
The senator had just exchanged mileage for himself and Mrs. Tillman to Augusta, and the inconveniences of travel under present conditions in this State were evidently uppermost in his mind.

"The mileage ought to be pulled on the trains," added the senator with characteristic emphasis, displaying his old-time fire.

Senator and Mrs. Tillman left this morning for their home at Trenton after a visit of two days to their son, Mr. Henry C. Tillman.

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"Do you think 1913 is an unlucky number?"

"Well," replied Mr. Chuggins.

"I don't mind '13' in a date line but I'd hate to have it on my automobile."

Washington Star.