

Marx Hardy Machiavelli Joyce Austen  
Defoe Abbot Melville Montaigne Cooper Emerson Hugo  
Stoker Wilde Christie Maupassant Haggard Chesterton Molière Eliot Grimm  
Garnett Engels Schiller Byron Molière  
Goethe Hawthorne Smith Kafka  
Cotton Dostoyevsky Kipling Doyle  
Baum Henry Flaubert Nietzsche Willis  
Leslie Dumas Stockton Vatsyayana Crane  
Burroughs Verne  
Curtis Tocqueville Gogol Busch  
Homer Tolstoy Whitman Twain  
Darwin Zola Lawrence Dickens Plato  
Potter Freud Jowett Stevenson Andersen Burton Harte  
Kant London Descartes Cervantes Voltaire Cooke  
Poe Aristotle Wells Bunner Shakespeare Chambers Irving  
Hale James Hastings Richter Chekhov da Shaw Wodehouse  
Doré Dante Pushkin Alcott  
Swift Chekhov Newton



tredition was established in 2006 by Sandra Latusseck and Soenke Schulz. Based in Hamburg, Germany, tredition offers publishing solutions to authors and publishing houses, combined with worldwide distribution of printed and digital book content. tredition is uniquely positioned to enable authors and publishing houses to create books on their own terms and without conventional manufacturing risks.

For more information please visit: [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

## TREDITION CLASSICS

This book is part of the TREDITION CLASSICS series. The creators of this series are united by passion for literature and driven by the intention of making all public domain books available in printed format again - worldwide. Most TREDITION CLASSICS titles have been out of print and off the bookstore shelves for decades. At tredition we believe that a great book never goes out of style and that its value is eternal. Several mostly non-profit literature projects provide content to tredition. To support their good work, tredition donates a portion of the proceeds from each sold copy. As a reader of a TREDITION CLASSICS book, you support our mission to save many of the amazing works of world literature from oblivion. See all available books at [www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com).



The content for this book has been graciously provided by Project Gutenberg. Project Gutenberg is a non-profit organization founded by Michael Hart in 1971 at the University of Illinois. The mission of Project Gutenberg is simple: To encourage the creation and distribution of eBooks. Project Gutenberg is the first and largest collection of public domain eBooks.

# Rope

Holworthy Hall

# Imprint

This book is part of TREDITION CLASSICS

Author: Holworthy Hall

Cover design: Buchgut, Berlin - Germany

Publisher: tredition GmbH, Hamburg - Germany

ISBN: 978-3-8472-1846-3

[www.tredition.com](http://www.tredition.com)

[www.tredition.de](http://www.tredition.de)

Copyright:

The content of this book is sourced from the public domain.

The intention of the TREDITION CLASSICS series is to make world literature in the public domain available in printed format. Literary enthusiasts and organizations, such as Project Gutenberg, worldwide have scanned and digitally edited the original texts. tredition has subsequently formatted and redesigned the content into a modern reading layout. Therefore, we cannot guarantee the exact reproduction of the original format of a particular historic edition. Please also note that no modifications have been made to the spelling, therefore it may differ from the orthography used today.

ROPE

# ROPE

BY

HOLWORTHY HALL

Author of "The Man Nobody Knew," etc.



NEW YORK  
DODD, MEAD AND COMPANY  
1922

ROPE

1



## CHAPTER I

As Henry came blithely into the house with a heavy suit-case in one hand and a cumbersome kit-bag in the other, his Aunt Mirabelle marched out like a grenadier from the living-room, and posted herself in the hallway to watch him approach. There was this much to say for Aunt Mirabelle: she was at least consistent, and for twenty years she had worn the same expression whenever she looked at him. During that period the rest of the world and Henry had altered, developed, advanced--but not Aunt Mirabelle. She had changed neither the style of her clothes nor the nature of her convictions; she had disapproved of Henry when he was six, and therefore, she disapproved of him today. To let him know it, she regarded him precisely as though he were still six, and had forgotten to wash his face.

"I suppose," remarked Aunt Mirabelle, in her most abrasive voice, "I suppose you're waiting for me to say I hope you had a good time. Well, I'm not a-going to say it, because it wouldn't be true, and I wouldn't want to have it sitting on my conscience. Of course, *some* people haven't got much of any conscience for anything to sit on, anyway. If they did, they'd be earnest, useful citizens. If they did, then once in a while they'd think about something else besides loud ties and silk socks and golf. And they wouldn't be gallivanting off on house-parties for a week at a time, either; they'd be tending to their business--if they had any. And if they hadn't, they ought to."

Henry put down the bag and the suit-case, removed his straw hat, and grinned, with a fair imitation of cheerfulness. He had never learned how to handle Aunt Mirabelle, and small wonder; for if he listened in silence, he was called sulky; if he disputed her, he was called flippant; if he agreed with her, she accused him of fraud; and if he obeyed his natural instincts, and treated her with tolerant good-humour, she usually went on a conversation strike, and never weakened until after the twelfth apology. Whatever he did was wrong, so that purely on speculation, he grinned, and said what came to his tongue.

"Maybe so," said Henry, "maybe so, but conscience is a plant of slow growth," and immediately after he had said this, he wished that he had chosen a different epigram---something which wasn't so liable to come back at him, later, like a boomerang.

"Humph!" said Aunt Mirabelle. "It is, is it? Well, if I was in your place, I'd be impatient for it to grow faster."

Henry shook his head. "No, I don't believe you would. I've read somewhere that impatience dries the blood more than age or sorrow." He assumed an air of critical satisfaction. "The bird that wrote that had pretty good technique, don't you think?"

She shrugged her shoulders. "All right, Henry. Be pert. But I know what made you so almighty anxious to sneak off on this house-party; and I know whose account it was you 4 went on, too, and I don't see for the *life* of me why your uncle hasn't put his foot down." She sighed, as though in deep mourning. "I did hope you'd grow up different from these other boys, Henry, but you're all of you just alike. When you get old enough, do you pick out some pure, innocent, sensible, young woman that's been trained the way girls were trained in *my* day? No. You go and make fools of yourselves over these short-skirted little hussies all powdered up like a box of marshmallows. And as long as they're spry enough *and* immodest enough to do all these new bunny dances and what not, you think that's a sure sign they'll make good wives and mothers. Humph. Makes me sick."

In spite of himself, Henry lost his artificial grin, and began to turn dull red. "I wouldn't go quite so far as to say that."

"Well," retorted Aunt Mirabelle, "I didn't hardly expect you would. But you'll go far enough to *see* one of 'em, I notice.... Well, your uncle's home this afternoon; long's he's paying your bills, you might have the grace to go in and say howdy-you-do to him." She 5 marched upstairs, and Henry, revolving his hat in his hand, gazed after her until she was out of sight. He stood, irresolute, until the echo of her common-sense shoes died into silence; and as he lingered, he was struck for the ten thousandth time by the amazing mystery of the human family.

First, there was his mother, a small and exquisite woman with music in her heart and in the tips of her fingers; his memory of her was dim, but he knew that she had been the maddest and the merriest of all possible mothers--a creature of joy and sunshine and the sheer happiness of existence. And then her sister Mirabelle, who found life such a serious condition to be in, and loved nothing about it, save the task of reforming it for other people whether the other people liked it or not. And finally, her brother John, bald, fat, and good-natured; a man whose personal interests were bounded by his own physical comfort, and by his desire to see everyone else equally comfortable. Whenever Henry thought of this trio, he reflected that his grandparents must have been very versatile.

6

He drew a long breath, and glanced up the stairway, as though the spirit of his Aunt Mirabelle were still haunting him; then, with a depressing recollection of what she had said about his conscience, and with hot resentment at what she said about his taste, he walked slowly into the library.

His uncle John Starkweather, who had been writing at a big desk between the windows, sprang up to shake hands with him. "Hello, boy! Thought Bob Standish must have kidnapped you. Have a good party?"

"Fine, thanks," said Henry, but his tone was so subdued and joyless that his uncle stared at him for a moment, and then went over to close the door. Standing with his back to it, Mr. Starkweather smiled reminiscently and a trifle ruefully, and began to peel the band from a cigar. "What's the matter? Mirabelle say anything to you?"

"Why--nothing special."

His uncle hesitated. "In a good many ways," he said, lowering his voice, "Mirabelle puts me in mind of my father. When he was a boy, out in the country, he'd had to smash the 7 ice in the water-pitcher every mornin', and he was proud of it--thought a boy that hadn't earned some of his godliness with an ice-pick was a dude. Thought what was good enough for his father was good enough for *him*, and sometimes it was *too* good. Didn't believe in modern improvements

like telephones and easy chairs and three-tined forks; didn't believe in labour-savin' devices because labour wasn't *meant* to be saved. Bible says for us to work six days a week, and if he ever had any spare time before Sat'day night, he figured he must have forgot somethin'. Business--well, he called advertisin' a rich man's luxury, and said an audit was an insult to his partners. Said he'd welcome a sheriff sooner'n he would an expert accountant--and in the long run, that's exactly what he *did*. Involuntary bankruptcy--found his sanctimonious old cashier'd been sanctimoniously lootin' the till for eighteen years." He paused, and eyed his cigar. "Well, Mirabelle's cut more or less off the same piece. Lord, I wish *she* could go through some kind of bankruptcy, if 't would shake her up like it did father."

8

"It--shook him up, did it?" inquired Henry, fidgeting.

"Well," said his uncle, "after the crash, I don't recollect he ever mentioned the good old times again except once; and that was to praise the good old habit of takin' defaulters and boilin' 'em in oil. No, sir, he wouldn't so much as add two and two together without an addin' machine, and he used to make an inventory of his shirts and winter flannels pretty near every week. And Mirabelle's the same way; she's still tryin' to live under the 1874 rules." He came back to his desk, and sat down thoughtfully. "Well, she's been talkin' to me ever since you went off on this party and as far's most of it's concerned, I'm not on *her* side, and I'm not on *your* side; I'm sort of betwixt and between." He looked sidewise at Henry, and discovered that Henry was peering off into space, and smiling as though he saw a vision in the clouds. "Just as man to man, just for the information; suppose you passed up everything I've said to you, and went and got married one of these days--did you expect I'd go on supportin' you?"

9

Henry came down to earth, and his expression showed that he had landed heavily. "Why--what was that?"

His uncle repeated it, with a postscript. "Oh, I've always told you you could have anything you wanted within reason that I could pay

for. But from what I been told"--his eyes twinkled--"wives ain't always reasonable. And it does seem to me that when a young man gets to be twenty five or six, and never did a lick of work in his life, and loaf around clubs and plays polo just because he's got a rich uncle, why, it's a sort of a reflection on both of 'em. Seem so to you?"

Henry glanced up nervously and down again. "To tell the truth, I hadn't thought much about it."

"Say," said his uncle, confidentially. "Neither had I. Not 'till Mirabelle told me you went off on this party because Anna Barklay was goin' to be there.... Now I had pretty hard sleddin' when I was your age; I've kind of liked to see you enjoy yourself. But Mirabelle-- Now I said before, I ain't on *her* side, and I ain't on *your* side; I had the thing 10 out with you once or twice already, and I guess you know what my angles are. Only if Mirabelle's got any grounds, maybe I ought to say it over again.... You been out of college four years now, and you tried the automobile business for two months and the bond business for two weeks and the real-estate business for two minutes, and there you quit. You spent five, six thousand a year and *that* was all right, but I admit I don't like the idea of your gettin' married on nothin' but prospects, specially when I'm all the prospects there is. Sound fair to you?"

Henry nodded, with much repression, "You couldn't be unfair if you tried, Uncle John."

"Well, you was always open to reason, even when you was in kindergarten.... Now, in some ways I don't approve of you any more'n Mirabelle does, but she wants me to go too blamed far. She wants me to turn you loose the way my father did me. She wants me to say if you should ever marry without my consent I'll cut you out of my will. But that's old stuff. That's cold turkey. Mirabelle don't 11 know times have changed--she's so busy with that cussed Reform League of hers, she don't have time to reform any of her own slants about things." He rolled his cigar under his tongue.

"Well, I'm goin' to compromise. Before you get involved too deep, I want you to know what's in my mind. I don't believe it's the best thing for either of us for me to go on bein' a kind of an ever-green money-bush. And a man that's earnin' his own livin' don't

have to ask odds of anybody. Don't you think you better bundle up your courage and get to work, Henry?"

Henry was twiddling his watch-chain. "It hasn't been a matter of *courage*, exactly--"

"Oh, I know *that*. I don't believe you're *scared* of work; you're only sort of shy about it. I never saw you really afraid of more'n three things--bein' a spoil-sport, or out of style, or havin' a waiter think you're stingy. No, you ain't *afraid* of work, but you never been properly introduced, so you're kind of standoffish about it. I've always kind of hoped you'd take a tip from Bob Standish--*there's* 12 one of your own breed that knows where the durable satisfactions of life are. Just as good family's yours; just as much money; just as fond of games;--and workin' like a prize pup in my office and makin' good. *He'll* tell you.... But if you go get married, boy, before you show you *could* take care of yourself, and what money I might leave you--oh, I don't say you got to put over any miracle, but I *do* say you got to learn the value of money first. You'd do that by earnin' some. If you don't, then you and me'd have a quarrel. Sound logical to you?"

Henry was frowning a little, and sitting nearer to the edge of his chair. "Too *darned* logical," he said.

His uncle surveyed him with great indulgence. "What's the idea?" he asked, humourously. "You ain't gone off and got yourself married already, have you?"

Henry stood up, and squared his shoulders, and looked straight into his uncle's eyes. His voice was strained, but at the same time it held a faint note of relief, as if he had contained his 13 secret too long for his own nerves. "Yes, Uncle John...."

And waited, as before the Court of last appeal.

## CHAPTER II

The older man sat limp in his chair, and stared until the ash of his cigar tumbled, untidily, over his waistcoat. He brushed at it with uncertain, ineffective motions, but his eyes never left his nephew. He put the cigar once more to his lips, shuddered, and flung it away.

"Boy--" he said, at length, "Boy--is that true?"

Henry cleared his throat. "Yes, Uncle John."

"Who is it? Anna Barklay?"

"Yes, Uncle John."

"When?"

"Yesterday afternoon."

"Does--Judge Barklay know it yet?"

"No, not yet. He's out of town."

His uncle drew a tremendous breath, and pulled himself upright. "Boy," he said, "why in the hell did you ever go and do a thing like that?... Haven't I been pretty decent to you, 15 the best I knew how?... Why'd you ever go, and--*have* I been mistaken in you all this while? Why, boy, I thought you and me were *friends*."

There was another heavy silence. "I don't know. It just happened. The way things do--sometimes. We've always been crazy about each other."

Mr. Starkweather was looking at and through his nephew, who was man-grown and presumably a rational human being; but what Mr. Starkweather actually saw was the vision of a little boy dressed in Lord Fauntleroy velvet, with silver knee-buckles and a lace collar; and much as a drowning man is supposed to review, in a lightning flash, every incident of his whole life, so was Mr. Starkweather reviewing the life of Henry, beginning with the era of black velvet, and ending with the immediate present. That history was a continuous record of dashing impulses, and the gayest irresponsibility; and yet, when the time came for an accounting, Henry had offered

only explanations, and never excuses. In his glorious pursuit of the calendar, he had paid his penalties as royally as he had earned them; and even now, when he 16 was confessed of the most impetuous and the most astounding act of all his unballasted youth, he had nothing to say in defence. As a climax, marriage had "happened" to him, and he was braced for whatever might happen next.

Presently, Mr. Starkweather, coming out of his daze, began to wonder if, by this very climax, Henry hadn't prescribed his own medicine, and at the same time taken out insurance on his own salvation. For one thing, he had selected the right girl--a girl with no money, and plenty of character--a girl who would manage him so skilfully that Henry would think himself the manager. For another thing, Mr. Starkweather believed that Henry was profoundly in love with her, even though he tried to conceal his seriousness by spreading it with a generous helping of light manner, and modern vocabulary. These facts, together with Mr. Starkweather's control of the finances, might possibly operate as the twin levers which would pry Henry out of his improvidence. The levers themselves were certainly strong enough; it was a question only of Henry's resistance. Mr. Starkweather winced to realize 17 that by the time the minute-hand of his watch had gone twice again around the dial, he should know definitely and permanently whether Henry was worth his powder, or not.

He leaned his elbows on his desk, judicially. "I'm pretty much knocked edgeways, Henry--but tell me one more thing; this wasn't any bet, was it, or--"

"Bet!" flared Henry, and all the youth went out of his features.

"Yes. Nobody *dared* you to go and get married--it wasn't any kind of a put-up job, was it?"

The younger man was righteously indignant. "Uncle John, I admit I haven't won any medals for--for *some* things,--and maybe you think I *am* the kind of bird that would--do this on a bet, or a dare--and if you *do* think that--I guess we're *both* mistaken in each other!"

His uncle's hand went up. "Hold your horses! You've answered the question. If you hadn't got mad, I'd have thrown you out the

window. Why *did* you do it, then?... No--never mind." He looked away. "I know. Spring, and impulse and no emergency brakes. 18 I know...." He looked back at Henry, and smiled oddly. "And I was just goin' to tell you, before you sprung it on me, that if you cared two cents about that girl,--and me, too,--you'd want to deserve her:--do somethin' besides be a model to hang expensive clothes on."

"Yes," said Henry, also judicial. "I guess I'm entitled to that wallop."

His uncle nodded. "That one and quite a few more. Still, you never heard anybody accuse me of not bein' a good sport, did you?"

"No, Uncle John. I counted on it."

"Who knows this--besides us?"

"Just Bob Standish. We took him along for a witness."

"So! Bob Standish! Hm. I'd have thought Bob'd had sense enough to try to stop it. I'll have words with him."

"He did try."

Mr. Starkweather rose. "Where's Anna?"

"Out in the car. With Bob."

His uncle froze. "Out there? Waitin' there all this time? For Heaven's sake, Henry, she'll be in a conniption fit! You go bring her in here--and tell her to stop worryin'. I'm 19 sore as the devil, and I'm goin' to make an example out of you, but that ain't any reason to act like a grouch, is it? Sound sensible to you? Bring her in here. Not Bob--I'll see him afterwards."

She was small and intensely feminine, but there was nothing fragile about her, and no slightest hint of helplessness. She was pretty enough, too, and her attractions were more than skin-deep; to the qualities which showed in her eyes--sincerity and humour and imagination--there was also to be added sweetness of disposition and sensitiveness, which were proved by the curves of her mouth; and finally, there was quiet determination, stopping just short of stubbornness, which was evident in the moulding of her strong little chin.

She came in slowly, questioningly, not in fear, but merely poised so as to adjust herself to any style of reception. Mr. Starkweather met her eyes and laughed--a fat, spontaneous, understanding laugh--and blushing furiously, she ran to him, with both her hands outstretched.

"Well, my dear," said Mr. Starkweather, and interrupted himself long enough to kiss her, "I'll say Henry's got a darned sight better judgment 'n *you* have.... Go on and blush. Make a good job of it. Ashamed of yourself? So 'm I. Sit down there and cringe. You too, Henry." He himself remained on his feet. "Funny thing," he said, after a pause. "Only chance I ever had to get married myself was somethin' like this is--oh, *I* wasn't a gilt loafer, like Henry is; I was workin' sixteen hours a day, but I wasn't makin' money enough. Both our fathers said so. And she'd have run off, but I wouldn't. Thought it wasn't respectable, I guess. Anyhow, it kind of petered out, and I lost my nerve. Wish to thunder I'd taken a chance when I had it. Worth it, sometimes." He whirled on Henry, abruptly. "Well, you took *your* chance. Now let's see if you think it's worth it. If you're figurin' on any help from me, you got to work for it first. If you'd waited, I'd kind of made things easy for you. Now, I'm goin' to hand you the meanest job I can think of. It won't be an insult and it won't be a joke, but maybe you'll take it for both--until you learn better."

"What is it, Uncle John?"

"I'll tell you when you get back from your honeymoon."

The two young people stared at each other, and at Mr. Starkweather. "From our--what?" asked the girl, incredulously.

"Honeymoon. Oh, you made a couple of prize fools of yourselves, and if I did what I ought to, I'd cut Henry off sharp this minute. But--guess I better make a fool of *myself*, so you'll feel more at home." He coughed explosively. "Besides, you're awful young, both of you--and damn it, if you don't cash in on it now, next thing you know you'll be wonderin' where the time's gone, anyway. No sense in robbin' you of the best months of your life, just because you hadn't sense enough to rob *yourselves* of it--is there? Oh, I suppose I'm a kind of a sentimental cuss, but--must be I like the feelin' of it." He jerked his head toward Henry. "This is April. Take her off

somewhere--Italy? South of France?--'till next August. Then you report back here, all fixed 22 and ready to eat crow. Sound fair to you?"

The girl rose, and crossed the room to him. "Mr. Starkweather--"

"Name's Uncle John," he corrected. "You married it."

"Uncle John--I--I don't know how to--" She bit her lip, and he saw the depths of her eyes, and saw that they were filling with tears. She gestured imperatively to Henry. "You know him better--*you* tell him."

Henry had sprung across to join them. "Uncle John, you're a peach! I'll break rock on the streets if you say so! You're a peach!"

"Well," said Mr. Starkweather, uncomfortably. "If everybody else's goin' to bawl, I guess it'll have to be contagious.... Only when you get back, you're both goin' to pay the piper. I'm goin' to make Henry earn his salt, whether he's got it in him or not; I'm goin' to make him crawl. That goes as it stands, too; no foolin'.... Look here, don't you want me to break it to the Judge? Guess I better. I can put it up to him in *writin'* twice as good as Henry put it up to me by talkin', anyhow.... And I'll put an announcement in the 23 *Herald* that'll take the cuss off. Anna, you hustle up some engraved notices to get around to all our friends. You know what's in style.... Oh, you're a couple of champion idiots, and Henry's goin' to sweat for it when he comes home, but--God bless you, my boy, and you too, my dear--only *how* in blazes am I goin' to get it across to Mirabelle? That's what bites me the worst, Henry; that's what bites me the worst!"



## CHAPTER III

In a small office on the third floor of the City Bank Building Mr. Theodore Mix, broker and amateur politician, sat moodily intent upon his morning newspaper. For thirty years (he was fifty-five) Mr. Mix had been a prominent and a mildly influential citizen, and by great effort he had managed to keep himself excessively overrated. A few years ago he had even been mentioned as a candidate for Mayor, and the ambition was still alive within him, although fulfillment was never so distant. But despite his appearance, which was dignified, and despite his manner, which would have done for the diplomatic corps, and despite his connection with local charities and churches and civic committees, Mr. Mix was secretly a bit of a bounder; and although the past decade or two he had made a handsome income, he had contrived to get rid of it as fast as he conveniently could, and by methods which wouldn't always have stood analysis.

Lately, for no apparent cause, his best customers had edged away from him; he was gliding rapidly into debt, and he knew that unless he clambered out again within six or eight weeks, he should have considerable difficulty in preserving his reputation, both financial and ethical. And like all men in the same position, Mr. Mix was fiercely jealous of his prestige; by long practice he had warped himself into thinking that it belonged to him; and he was ready to defend it with every conceivable weapon.

For the moment, however, Mr. Mix was querulous rather than defensive. He was trying to place the blame for the past two seasons of misfortune, and when he observed that Pacific Refining was twelve points up from Saturday's close, he sighed wearily and told himself that it was all a matter of luck. He had had an appointment, last Saturday at nine o'clock, with his friend John Starkweather, and he had meant to borrow something from him, if possible, and to risk a few hundred shares of Pacific Refining on margin; but he had overslept, and Mr. Starkweather had left his office at nine fifteen and hadn't come back again that day, so that the profit which might so easily have come to rest in Mr. Mix's pockets was now in other quarters.

Luck! The most intangible of assets and the most unescapable of liabilities. On Saturday, Mr. Mix had arrived too late because he had overslept because his alarm-clock had been tinkered by a watch-maker who had inherited a taste for alcohol from a parent who had been ruined by the Chicago fire--and almost before he knew it, Mr. Mix had trailed the blame to Adam and Eve, and was feeling personally resentful. It was plain to him that his failure wasn't in any sense his own fault.

As he resumed his paper, however, his querulousness yielded to a broad sunny optimism, and he turned to the sporting page and hunted out the news from the Bowie track. He had a friend at Bowie, and the friend owned a horse which he swore was the darkest three-year-old in captivity; he had wired Mr. Mix to 27 hypothecate his shirt, and bet the proceeds on the fourth race, this coming Saturday. The odds would be at least 10 to 1, he said, and he could place all the money that Mr. Mix might send him.

Mr. Mix leaned back and built a stable in the air. Suppose he could borrow a couple of thousand. Twenty thousand clear profit. Then a quick dash into the cotton-market (the price was certainly going to break wide open in another month) and the twenty would unfold, and expand, and become fifty. And if a shrewd, cold-blooded man went down to Wall Street with fifty thousand dollars, and played close to his chest, he ought to double his capital in four months. To be sure, Mr. Mix had been losing steadily for a dozen years, but he was confident that he had it in him to be a great and successful plunger. He felt it. Heretofore, he had been handicapped by operating on a shoestring; but with fifty thousand dollars to put his back against--

His stenographer announced a caller, and on the instant, Mr. Mix, put on his other personality, and prepared to silver his tongue. 28 The caller, however, came straight to Mr. Mix's desk, and flipped out one sheet from a large portfolio. "Say," he remarked brusquely. "What's the matter with this bill? Ziegler and Company. Two ninety two sixty--dated November."

Mr. Mix laughed genially, and offered a cigar. "Why, nothing's the matter with it."