



ON TIPTOE

by Stewart Edward White

Illustrations by Henry Jay Lee

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WHO'S WHO IN THE STORY

GRIMSTEAD, a capitalist, stranded by the breaking down of his car on a California mountain side.

BURTON GRIMSTEAD, his charming, spoiled daughter, is with him. She is not overly pleased when she finds that her father had insisted on her coming in order that she may be thrown in with

ROSS GARDINER, her father's second-in-command, a capable young man whom, however, she does not like.

SIMMINS, their English butler-chauffeur, is sent after help and returns with

LAWRENCE DAVENPORT, a young fellow in a ludicrous home-built car with a battery that is shown to be a marvellous invention, producing, by some mysterious agency, from the air, the electricity by which the car runs. His winning a \$10,000 bet from Gardiner by correctly predicting a rain storm, and the revelation (to her alone) that he is "the" Lawrence Davenport, a famous writer, make him vastly interesting to Miss Burton Grimstead.

CHAPTER VII

"The royalty idea appeals to me," answered Davenport, "for I certainly do not want to get mixed up in affairs unless I have to. But I do feel responsibility in turning a thing like this loose without trying to do my part."

"You'll find the business part of it in pretty competent hands," Grimstead assured him.

"I do not doubt that for a moment," said Davenport. "I shouldn't have a moment's uneasiness on that score. I'm thinking of the world at large."

"World at large," repeated Grimstead, a little blankly.

"Yes. You, of course have not thought of this as much as I have, for it is a new proposition. But I've been pondering on it for a very long while. It's the terrific upset in industry that must come from this."

"Of course there will be readjustments," agreed Grimstead.

"But just stop to follow this out. Let's suppose, for the sake of argument, that this battery is all it might be; that it is a genuine short cut; and to unlimited power. The gas and electric companies would simply have to go out of business. Why should anybody buy anything of them? Reaching out from that, think of the correlated industries that would be more or less affected."

"I've got that kind of imagination, young man," interrupted Grimstead drily. "I'd already considered all that."

"Of course," smiled Davenport, relapsing from his tense eagerness, "and then besides there are hundreds of thousands of workmen who would be thrown out of employment for a time until a readjustment had been made."

"Why, it sounds terrible!" cried Burton.

"That's why I say there's a responsibility connected with it. All this capital and these works of various kinds and these workmen will find other and probably more ultimately useful things to do after a time. It shouldn't be sprung on them all at once."

"What would be your suggestion?" asked Grimstead.

Davenport laughed boyishly.

"My goodness! That's a large order! But I suppose it might be fed out through a single industry at first—say, motorboat engines, or something of that kind. If we hold the patents, we could regulate that exactly."

"Then you finally prefer the stock proposition?"

"I guess it's what I ought to have," said Davenport.

"Very well," returned Grimstead. "Gardiner, get your notebook and take this."

Gardiner had risen from the post of private secretary and so took short-hand.

"Draw me up a proper contract embodying these points," Grimstead instructed him. "Patents in name of Universal Power Corporation. Capital stock 100,000 shares, no par value, non-assessable. Forty per cent to furnish all working capital. Manufactory to commence within three months. One hundred thousand dollars to be paid to Mr. Davenport as bonus cash payment on the conclusion of the first 1000 bona fide sales. That satisfactory as far as it goes?"

The attentive youth nodded.

"All right. Now just to cover the point you brought up, add this: That for the first five years Mr. Davenport is to have the veto right as to any contemplated extensions of business. That suit you, Davenport?"

"That's fine!" cried the young man.

Gardiner disappeared with a flashlight in the direction of the car, carrying a portable typewriter. Grimstead met him just at the circle of the firelight.

"No shenanigan about this, Ross," he warned in a low voice. "I want this contract drawn absolutely fair, so that any lawyer he may consult will approve of it. I don't want a chance for an objection once we leave this place."

"I understand that part of it, but—"

"He's one of those lily-whites," growled Grimstead. "I've got him located now. Full of uplift and shy of horse sense. I know 'em; and they've got to be handled. He's cackoo on the service-to-humanity staff. The chances are that he won't sign any contract without

seeing a lawyer. So draw up a subsidiary agreement on his part to sign the contract provided his lawyer—get his name—pronounce it technically correct. We'll get him to sign that anyway; and that will tie him up."

It was near 10 o'clock before the little typewriter ceased clicking, and about 11 when Davenport affixed his signature to the agreement to sign. As Grimstead had foreseen, he did not want to sign the contract itself without expert advice as to its form; but, being satisfied with its substance, he was willing to agree to that.

"Water, lemons, sugar!" Grimstead then called to Simmins, and set out on the ground before him four tumblers, pouring into each a generous measure from a bottle. The drinks mixed, Simmins handed one to each. Grimstead arose.

"Here's to the Universal Power Corporation!" he proposed.

They drank. Larry saw the toil-driven millions and the lifting of yet another of the great pressures of life. Burton saw confusedly an angel with a flaming sword somehow reopening by a crack the gates of Eden. Gardiner contemplated a vision of great activity and great wealth. Grimstead was smiling. What he saw the great invisible intelligence too were perceiving through the lenses of his soul. They did not smile.

CHAPTER XIII

"Go to the Ant"

The next morning a corduroy road across the meadow was made and a road around the fallen redwood was begun.

Then Grimstead decided to go fishing and received some information from Davenport about the lurking place of rainbow trout.

"There's one thing; be sure you get the most northerly swale," concluded Larry. "The country starfishes up there, and if you get following the wrong canyon you'll end lost."

"You better come along, Ross," said Grimstead. "Go get your tackle."

Gardiner appeared in the direction of the car, and was gone so long that Grimstead became fidgety. Gardiner seemed to have a great deal of tackle to rig and clothes to put on.

"Here," called Grimstead, at last. "I'm going to make a start. You follow along when you get ready. I'll strike the stream and fish down, and you keep going until you find me."

He tramped off sturdily, and 10 minutes later, after vexations delays having to do with leaders and the disentangling thereof, Gardiner followed. Simmins approached.

"There would seem to be no occasion for my further presence, sir," he suggested, indicating with a turn of the head the direction of the patiently laboring self-starter.

"We seem to be safe for the present," agreed Davenport. "Why? What's on your mind?"

"I thought I would like to try my luck, sir."

"Sure. Go to it! Better go down-stream, though."

In five minutes Simmins departed blissfully. Already he had a complete drama in cold storage having to do with his return at eventide carrying a long string of shining beauties to find that Grimstead and Gardiner, for all their fancy tackle, had succeeded in landing only four, and they rather small.

Plunketty-Snivvles and Rapsallion followed Simmins.

Burton, coming from her tent a few minutes later, found Larry smoking his pipe alone.

"Deserted. Everybody. Even the dogs," he answered her inquiry. "Like to go walking?"

"Surely!" she cried eagerly.

They headed straight up the stream, coming at length to a narrow gorge at the entrance to which stood detached a fragment of rock, big as a summer cottage, square as a cube of sugar. A jagged heap of alus and debris gave a rather rough passage to the top.

"Pretty scrambly," said Davenport. "Think you can make it?"

She scorned reply, but began at once to scramble up over the jagged talus. Davenport watched the poise of her light and graceful figure for a moment, then followed.

The top of the rock was perfectly flat, but at two elevations, one two feet higher than the other. It was carpeted deep with moss.

"Hop down," advised Larry, himself descending to the lower of the two elevations. "Now sit down and lean your back. Can you beat this?"

The natural seat thus formed and cushioned commanded to the right a view up the stream which at this point ran straight and wide for some distance. Birds flitted and midges hovered in the sun.

"I want to know more about these gifts of yours," demanded Burton after a time. "I want to know how you knew so accurately about the rain?"

"I don't know very clearly myself," Larry answered. "I've never tried to express it." He hesitated; seeking for an opening.

"Did you ever read Maeterlinck's 'Life of the Bee'?" he inquired. "Or any of Fabre's insect books?"

cially ants, have what you might call a co-operative government that is as complicated and a lot more intelligent and efficient than any human government. You would hardly go so far as to say that an ant is an intellectual creature; that he, or any of his ancestors or fellows, has a brain that could think out and put in operation a system of government. Yet he acts with a heap more intelligence than most men do—on the average. How come?"

"I don't know." "Neither do I; but I surmise. Suppose for the sake of argument that in the void all about and through us is a saturate solution of all possible knowledge and wisdom. The things we call living creatures live in this; it is all around us; but we are more or less cut off from it by the fact that we are individual and imperfect beings. We are in shells, let us say; particular wisdom or knowledge gets to us only through special cracks. A perfect being would have a point of contact for every possible knowledge or wisdom. But in our infinite world every individual, whether it is a rock or a tree or an ant, is so built that he can come in contact only with the particular little piece of wisdom or intelligence from the great store that he needs in his business. All the rest of the points of contact are blocked off by his individual structure. Thus within his limits he has perfect knowledge. It's the same all through nature. How do you suppose quail know ahead of time whether the season is to be dry or wet, and breed accordingly? The more you think if it the more instances you will perceive."

"I do," he assured her. "I am shaken, and I don't know; I can't tell what it means." "It is the answer to my love for you!" he breathed.

She turned her clear eyes on him again.

"I do not know," she repeated, "and I must know. I might allow you to keep my hand and to— and to go on, and there is something

CHAPTER XIV

Burton Finds It Curious

"That is the most interesting thing I have heard!" breathed Burton. "And it sounds so reasonable! But you know we started to talk about you, not about quails and ants. I believe you are a crafty sidestepper."

"We're headed toward me. If things were all working along the way they should, man would have this same access to universal wisdom that the lower creatures have. As respects all the things he would normally run against in his everyday normal life he would see, or feel—perceive is a better word—the causes and effects and results; because the stream of life would flow through him by certain channels turning certain wheels."

"That's what you do?" she cried excitedly. "I see!"

"In a very small and practical way; a little more than the average. People have just about lost that power. They have little remnants of it. You've heard of 'premonitions' that have worked out; or a 'feeling' that some one was in the room; or experienced some one of the numerous 'coincidences,' such as receiving a letter right on top of some especial thought of the person who wrote it. You may have had dreams that came true."

"Yes," she cried, "what about it?"

"You probably thought of all as uncanny. It wasn't uncanny at all. Simply old, choked channels letting through a trickle."

She pondered this a moment, her brows puckered prettily.

"Is it our fault—this choking?" she asked. "How did it happen?"

"I don't know, of course; but I surmise," he repeated. "It is the intervention of mind, of intellect. Man's intelligence is a fine tool, and complicated. But it was supposed to be only a tool for the purpose of examining and making practical what came to it by direct channel. Man-kind got so tickled with it that he began to run all his affairs by it alone. That blocked the channel. The mind took control, instead of playing with a fresh supply on first hand—well, call it inspiration; that's what it is—we make over and re-fashion old stuff. If it weren't for the fact that some people's channels are not completely blocked, so that a kind of trickle does get thru; and if it wasn't for an occasional crazy genius who busts out, we'd tie ourselves up in our minds and dry up and blow away."

"Then," she summed up slowly, "you could tell about the rain and the tree falling, because this current flowed through you?"

"That's roughly it."

"How do you do it?"

"It's hard to say. I set my mind aside and then take what comes to me. I turn my attention to the type of thing that is useful for me to know."

"Do you think everybody ought to have this power?"

"Yes, it belongs normally in the race."

"Could I do it—with practice?"

"I'm certain of it."

"Oh," she cried. "I want to try! How do you start?"

He smiled.

"This is no conjuring trick to be learned; it's a good healthy faculty to be developed. You've got to relax something inside of you that you hold tight together for everyday life—something in your consciousness. Then things just float in and you leave them alone for future reference."

"I'm going to begin now," she announced.

She laid aside her hat, and the cool air current was stirring the hair at her temples. Little by little her form fell into the simple, restful curves of relaxation; one by one even the smaller muscles relinquished their guard. Her face took on

the dreamy and far-away peacefulness of a sleeping child's.

Thus 15 minutes passed. Then she stirred slightly.

"Well?" asked Davenport at last. "It was certainly very curious," she confessed. "I can't make it out."

He hesitated, and the sunburn on his cheeks seemed to deepen a little. "Are we going to waste time?" he asked gently.

She did not reply. After waiting a moment he reached out and took her hand.

CHAPTER XV

The Mystery

"You did see," Davenport went on. "You saw what I saw yesterday when we were in the old orchard, what I have felt from the very first instant I saw you standing in the firelight—beautiful as the night!"

She turned on him troubled eyes. "I don't know why I talk and act this way. It seems almost shameless. I do not understand it. But somehow I cannot hide and dodge and retreat and flirt as I— it is impossible. I do not know what it is that has come to me, Larry, and you must wait until I find out. I have been made love to before and—from the first I have been attracted to you. Just now when I tried to set my mind aside, as you call it, just one idea, one impression, came to me, and that was of nearness to you—I don't mean physical nearness—I don't know what I mean or what I'm talking about."

"I do," he assured her. "I am shaken, and I don't know; I can't tell what it means."

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leaping within me that tells me I would be swept away by your love. But I must not; and you must not. If it were not so serious to me, that might happen. I am talking in what my mother would have called a most unmaidenly manner," she ended with a wistful little smile.

He gently restored her hand to her lap.

"I understand," said he. "But it will come. I am on air! It can no more help coming than the poppy can help unfolding in the sun."

"I hope not," she breathed, but so low that he did not catch the syllables.

At this moment, just when some obvious change of subject seemed most desirable, Grimstead appeared wading down the middle of the stream.

"Keep quiet!" Burton adjured Larry. "Let's surprise him!"

The fisherman was having a fine time, splashing down the long strait vista, casting his fly right, left and straight ahead as he advanced. Larry watched him critically for a few moments.

"He knows the job," he told Burton. "Did you see him make that flip cast to the pool behind the cedar root?"

(Continued Next Week)

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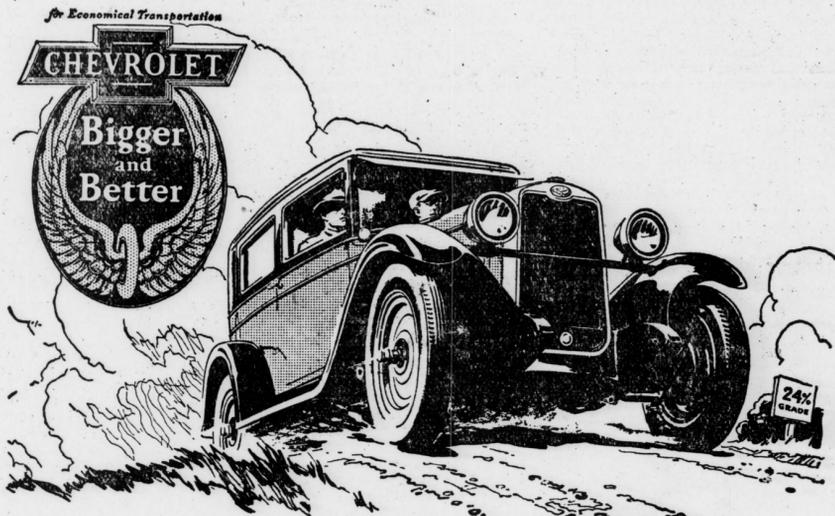
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