

**A SELF-MADE
MAN; PP. 195-360**

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SELF-MADE MAN.

BY

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A SELF-MADE MAN.

CHAPTER I.

"EH? what? Who did you say the big fellow was?"
"Ned Anthony, the millionaire."

The questioner, a thick-set man with a snub nose, rose hastily and opened the window of the hotel smoking-room and leaned far out, eager to inspect the broad shoulders and the brown slouch hat of the money king. For blood, or beauty, or breeding, he would not have turned upon his heel; but for gold, no exertion could be troublesome.

When the brown hat and the broad shoulders had been swallowed up in the sea of other hats and shoulders, similar in outward aspect if not in intrinsic value, the snub-nosed man returned to his chair and his pipe, bubbling over with the inquiry and speculation which the contemplation of financial success is potent to inspire.

"This must be a new lay-out. I seem to have heard the name somewhere before. Not here: I never heard of him here until I came up this time. I've been ranching down in Texas, you know, and am sorter behind the times in city items. It's all 'cow' down there. He ain't 'cow,' I reckon."

He addressed himself to no one in particular, being, as he said, a stranger to most of them, but he had no fear of the result. Money is a text on which the learned discourse eloquently and even the unlearned feel that they have a few remarks to make. One of a group of miners who were enjoying a holiday in the city laid down his cards and turned himself in his chair. The game was "California Jack" with a twenty-dollar pot, and was admirable *pour passer le temps*, but paltry in interest when compared with the discussion of millions.

"No, sir-ee. I believe you!" the miner observed, contemptuously, for the recent losses among the cattle-men had put "cow" at a discount in his estimation. "You don't catch none of Ned Anthony's stock roaming around on four legs, locking horns with a Norther. The cold wave ain't left the pole yet that'll rush *his* property up into the corner of a corral and go over it. Ned'll take risks with any man alive, but he ain't fooling with cattle this season."

The Texan slipped away from the subject. He had lost considerably on cattle himself, and discussion of the topic was still painful. He changed his ground from suggestion to direct inquiry.

"How'd he make his pile?"

"Same way we all do,—or try to," responded the miner: "mines, an' stocks, an' sheers. We all take to the water pretty much the same way, sink or swim. Most of us sink, a few swim; and Anthony is one of the few."

"Good swimmer, eh?"

"First-rate; strong in the lung, clear in the head, good action, fine muscle, and a big will. He'll make what landing he aims for, you can bet your bottom dollar, even with the current dead ag'inst him. It will take a pretty heavy freshet to drown out Anthony. His belief in himself is something wonderful: he holds it for a dead sure thing that it ain't in the power of man to git *his* head under water."

"It may be in the power of woman, though," remarked a slender, gentlemanly-looking man who was leaning on the back of a chair, listening to the conversation, and whose accent proclaimed him to be a Virginian. "Such things have happened before now. The biggest Samson of us all meets his Delilah sooner or later and comes under the shears. It's a fate few escape."

"That's so?" acquiesced the miner, regretfully. "They're mortal hands with scissors, women are, and they'll snip-snap around a man so bright and fast his strength is done up in a bundle ready for stufin' pincushions, an' such, before he gits a notion of what they're up to. It's always a look for a keepsake, and down a fellow's head goes into their aprons, to come up again as clean as a billiard-ball. Lord! Lord! what a world it would be without women!"

The Virginian laughed. "A world I'd rather be excused from living in, my friend," he said. "Angels, or devils, or whatever they are, life would be a tame affair without them. What's that that Western poet-fellow said?—'Whether a man be hell-bent or heaven-bent, somewhar in his tracks thar will be found the print of a woman's feet.' That's it, isn't it? And your poet had brought the matter down to bed-rock."

The talk had drifted far away from Ned Anthony and his money: the Texan brought it back with the resolute jerk of another downright question. He was a man who stuck to his point and was impatient of frivolous digression. He liked reverting to primal cause, and considered exhaustive investigation of the career of successful competitors in the race of Mammon likely to be rich in hints for the guidance of those less well placed in the running.

"Oh, dog women!" he said. "They're well enough; but don't let's bother about 'em now. I want some of you fellows just to tell me how this man Anthony got his start."

The miner picked up his cards and looked them over deliberately. Then he winked across at his partner, to call his wandering attention to the fact that "Jack" was on top to be played for. When this matter had been settled to his satisfaction, he turned back to the Texan and gave the desired information in two words:

"Prairie-dogs."

A deep abstraction fell upon the man of kine, and his pipe went out unnoticed. He had been hearing of the wonderful Prairie-Dog Mine for the last four years. Even down in the cattle-country the mine was known and talked about. Its phenomenal richness, the queer story of its discovery, the unprecedented luck of everything and everybody connected with it, had made exciting variety in the "cow" conversation around the root fire in many a ranchman's hut, and "Tony Ned," the hero of the find, was regarded with the respectful admiration which is a concomitant of success.

"Was there any truth in the leper story?" he roused himself to inquire; "or was it just a newspaper *canard*?"

"Well," deliberated the miner, craftily saving his partner's ten and "low" for himself at the same stroke, "I guess there *was* a grain or two of truth in the dirt the papers panned at so damnation hard some years back. Nobody ain't intimate with that story, nor got the run of the back door on details, except one man, and that's 'Tony Ned,' as he was called before he made his lump. Ned ain't likely to gratify the morbid hankering after sensation that agitates the journalistic breast any more than suits him, neither."—He paused to murmur to his companions, "Hear *that*? good words, them,—able-bodied fellows," and then proceeded: "No, Ned don't give himself away much. Most of them stories were written up in the offices by the men that know all about it, as usual. Still, they couldn't miss getting a grain or so of metal out of all that grit."

"And those were——" suggested the Texan, eagerly.

"That Tony Ned (high to me, if *you* please) went prospecting in the Sierra Madre country five or six years back, and chanced on the biggest find any fellow has made since I've been digging: a thundering find, as good as the Comstock any day. The way the story runs, as the miners tell it, is just this; and I reckon it's as true a bill as any, because Ned never contradicts it." The miner, having secured the pot, laid aside his hand, and turned to face the room. "Ned was prospecting down there-away, and he had a run of bad luck at first, black enough to set the devil

swearing. After digging around for a month or so, and getting nothing for it but pain in the back, Ned saddled up his broncho and came down out of the hills, swearing he was going to quit sending his bucket down a dry well. He pulled right and he pulled left for a while before he could get himself to agree all round to quitting; for Tony Ned has as good a grip in the jaw as most bull-dogs going, and he mortally hates to leave hold of a thing he's once set his teeth in. He had a sorter feeling, too, that there was ore about, if only he could strike it. However, he quit, and took out across the plains into Arizona, and the more he went forward the more he hankered after going back, and the more sure he was that the Madres had a secret they were hiding from him. At last he left the thing to chance, as they say miners and sailors are fond of doing.

"It was the morning of the second day, and a good square sixty miles lay behind him. He was cooking his rasher and coffee, and cursing his luck, and his broncho, having eaten up all the grass in his lariaticircle, was looking on and listening. Two little prairie-dogs sat on a mound close by, enjoying the early sunshine; but the rest of the village were asleep. Presently the little beggars fell out about something, and set to for a regular rough-and-tumble. One was bigger than the other, and a queer notion struck Ned as he sat and watched 'em. He named the big dog 'sense,' and the little one he called 'instinct.' 'If 'sense' whips,' he said to himself, 'I'll push on and try my luck in Arizona. But if "instinct" wins, I'm going back to the Madres.' He eyed 'em close, and presently he got up and walked over to his saddle: the little dog had got the big dog down, and fairly rolled him down the mound."

The Virginian removed his arms from the back of the chair, and seated himself in it. The story probably interested him as much as it did the other men. The initial steps of success are always interesting when success has been achieved: it is only the chronicle of failure that is tedious.

"When he got back to the hills," proceeded the narrator, "he went on a good bit farther north before striking into them again. He nosed around for all he was worth; but for about a week bad luck held on like a burr: then the tide turned. He was driving the broncho up a steep, ugly-looking spur, on a track that a cat could hardly scramble over, when all at once the beast put his blamed little hoof on a rolling stone, and, before Ned could make a decent grab for his tail, turned heels over head and rolled like a log down into the cañon. It wasn't a healthy-looking place to try the 'follow-my-leader' dodge, so Ned nosed about for a better. After a little he came upon what looked to be an old trail, and he followed it down into the cañon, where he found

the broncho, with his baggage smashed up, but otherwise all right. Tough little beasts, bronchos.

"Half-way of the cañon there was an open space, with trees like a little park, pines and red-woods, and near the centre was a deep snow-fed pool. Against the wall of the cliff at one side was a rough cabin built of red-wood slabs, and inside of it, at the back, was the mouth of the Prairie-Dog Mine."

The speaker paused and filled his pipe, as though he had nothing more to say on the subject. A silence fell, during which the sounds of the street stole into the room, the roll of vehicles, the stir and bustle of traffic, and the voices of the street-gamins quarrelling in the gutter.

"What became of the leper?" It was the Texan's voice that put the question.

"There the story grows misty. Nobody knew anything about the leper until after the find, except a few trappers and Indians. Some said he was an Apache, and others that he was a Mexican priest. Nobody knows for certain what he was, except perhaps Ned Anthony, and he won't talk about it. The leper was dead, he told them all, and buried under a red-wood-tree close by the pool. He'd made the grave himself, and put the poor wretch in it: uncommon kind of Ned, I say, for whether leprosy is catching or not, it's a damned unpleasant thing to handle. Some fellows that wanted to upset Ned's claim to the find started the cry of foul play, in hopes that the boys would take it up and lynch him. But Ned soon snuffed that out. He just marched the whole gang out to the grave, and laid his hand on it, and swore by the Lord that made him that the leper had had nothing but kindness from his hands, and then he told the fellows that if they doubted his word they could open the grave and satisfy themselves."

"Did they?"

"Lord love you, no!" cried the miner, in surprise. "Of course they didn't! Who do you reckon was going to monkey with a corpse?—and such a corpse! Why, they set fire to the hut and burned it to the ground before they'd been in the cañon two days. They didn't hanker after going in and out to their work through it all day long: the thought of the leper sorter got away with the stoutest of 'em, whenever the sun quit the gulch: 'twasn't comforting to their innards. Nobody cared a damn about the poor devil anyway, beyond wiping all sign of him off the face of the earth. The mine was there, and the ore was there,—rich, too, and in good bulk. *That* was the big interest. Ned made a lumping good thing out of that prairie-dog hole of his'n. He panned out in the millions."

This appeared to exhaust the subject for most of the listeners, who