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A CLEW BY WIRE
 Or, An Interrupted Current.
 BY HOWARD M. YOST.
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CHAPTER II.

It was something like coming home, after all, albeit to a house almost void of furniture and peopled only with reminiscences of loved forms long since gone. At any rate, it was the only home I could really call my own.

There were two rooms, the spare bedroom and the parlor adjoining, on the first floor, which still retained the furniture. Everything about these rooms, though faded and somewhat worn, was in good order, and I complimented Mrs. Snyder on the care she had taken.

Although the place had not been allowed to go to ruin, there was about it that indescribable quality which is attached to long-deserted houses. We all felt it more or less. Sarah and Mrs. Snyder spoke in whispers; Jake stepped about on tiptoe, as though fearful that the heavy tread of his cowhide boots would bring back the spirits of the departed; while to myself there was a pathos about the old house which had not known an inhabitant for so long. It seemed like some human being deserted by its own flesh and blood.

While I was passing from bureau to wardrobe, from center-table to mantel-piece, taking mental notes of all the old-fashioned china and bric-a-brac which adorned those places still, and which in my young days had been forbidden my boyish fingers, Sarah and Mrs. Snyder made up the bed, taking the bedding from a huge cedar chest which stood on one side of the room.

Sprigs of spruce and hemlock had been placed in the chest from time to time, and when the cover was lifted the pungent odor filled the room.

All through the preparations I noticed that Sarah and Mrs. Snyder were engaged in earnest conversation. The old widow was especially vehement, and Sarah would frequently shake her head and give forth exclamations indicative either of wonder or of disapprobation. My old nurse also favored me with many glances which seemed to have much of solicitude in them.

When everything had been done to make me comfortable for the night, Sarah turned to me, and spoke low, with a touch of fear in her tones.

"Come, Nel, you go back home with us," she said. "Don't stay here all alone in this grade big house. I am afraid to have you. Come back with us," she reiterated, appealingly.

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"Come back with us," again pleaded Sarah. "No. If there is anything out of the ordinary about my house, I am the more determined to remain and find out what it is," I said, decisively. Then I added, more softly, for I did not wish to wound the kind heart of my old nurse—I knew her fear for me grew out of her love and solicitude for my welfare—"I can take care of myself under any circumstances. I am not a child now, Sarah."

"Den let Jake stay with you until you find out," Sarah persisted. "Well, bud de oats, Sarah; we go to finish de oats to-morrow," hastily exclaimed Mr. Hunsicker, in remonstrance.

"Now come, how foolish this is! What could be the matter with the house? Nothing hurtful, that is certain. I'll be all right. Don't worry, and I'll ride over in the morning and tell you how soon I sleep."

"Der's no candle here. I go ged von and bring id over," Mrs. Snyder said. "Not necessary for to-night. I am going to bed early, and will not need it. To-morrow we'll see about lamps, for sometimes I like to read late. See how bright the moon is going to be. It shines right into the bedroom, and will give me plenty of light to go to bed by."

I finally succeeded in getting rid of them. Old Jake was eager and anxious to leave me to the lonely terrors which her superstitious mind had conjured up. It was only after I had given my promise to come immediately to her house in the event of any danger to my springing up, that she consented to leave. Feeling profoundly gratified that my coming here had revealed to me such absolute trust and love as inspired my old nurse, I placed my arm about her waist while going to the door, and then parted from her with a kiss on her wrinkled old cheek.

After the sound of the wagon wheels had died away in the distance, I disrobed and prepared for bed. The moonlight was so enticing, however, that I sat down on a chair by the window and for a few minutes gave myself up to reminiscence.

But before I go on with my experiences in the old house, I must tell about the bank robbery of which I was suspected. Up to a year before, I had been engaged in a large savings institution in Philadelphia. My advancement with this concern had been slow but steady, and after ten years of earnest work I finally attained the position of senior paying teller. Under my immediate charge was the vault, in which the cash and all securities held by the bank were kept. This vault was, of course, guarded by a time lock. The bank opened for business at ten o'clock, but the bookkeepers began their work a half hour earlier. There was a separate vault for the books of the concern, which was not furnished with a time lock, and all the bookkeepers knew the combination of this vault.

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John Russell Young, the first chief executive of the magnificent new congressional library, soon to be opened to the public, was born in Downingtown, Pa., in 1841, and was educated in the public schools. He is not a college-bred man, but by his own endeavors has taken high rank as a finished writer. He began work as a reporter on the Philadelphia Press and at the beginning of the civil war joined the army of the Potomac as a war correspondent. Subsequently he started a newspaper in Philadelphia and another one in New York city. He studied law and was admitted to the bar, but after practicing awhile went to Europe as correspondent.

He stated the circumstances concerning the lock. "It is possible that I will be unable to be on hand at half-past eight," I added. "And you wish me to be at the bank in your place?" he said. "Yes, if it would not inconvenience you."

"Not at all. I will be there, so the rule will be complied with. Oh, stay a moment. There is an old aunt of mine over in Camden who is ill, and I might possibly be summoned to her bedside."

"Well, then, let it go. I'll stay at home, and go to the bank, as I intended, myself," I said, feeling quite disappointed.

"But if I say I will be at the bank you may depend on me, Mr. Conway, sick aunt or not," Jackson went on. He really seemed so willing to do me the favor that I could only reply: "Thank you very much. I'll depend on you. It will be doing me a great favor indeed. I'll reciprocate some day."

"Not another word, Mr. Conway, on the subject. Go and enjoy yourself." Then he regarded me with a smile as he continued: "I suppose it is Miss Morley that you intend to visit. Now, I am just on my way to see her father at his office."

"Oh, you are acquainted with the Morleys, then?" I remarked, somewhat coldly, for I did not relish his bringing Florence Morley's name into the conversation.

"Only slightly acquainted. I am interested in a few business ventures with Mr. Morley. My acquaintance extends no further," Jackson said.

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