JOHN BURT

By FREDERICK UPHAM ADAMS

Author of "The Kidnapped Millionaire," "Colonel Stevens's Doubleton," Etc.

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CHAPTER NINE—Continued.

Tears were now seen peeping around his neck, a face wet with tears instilled for a moment on his shoulder, and she kissed him twice, with the live kisses that come from the heart of a woman who knows she has passed the mysterious border that separates friendship from love.

"Good-bye, John. God bless you and guard you!"

"Good-bye, Jessie; good-bye!"

He watched her as she faded away from him and disappeared beyond the vines which shaded the veranda.

Under the arched maples where he had walked with Jessie so many times, and down the sandy road where they had loitered in summer days now gone forever, John Burt urged the horse along. It was two miles to Peter Burt's, and he soon reached the gloomy old house. A figure stood by the gate, which he fled forward and recognized his grandfather.

"You old devil, what have you done, boy," said the old man, when, nearly calm voice held an anxious note. "Something happened, and my soul has been calling you since dusk. Ride to the graveyard and I'll follow you. It isn't safe to talk here."

In the far corner of the old grave yard John Burt hitched his horse and turned to meet his grandfather. The old man leaned himself on the grave of the pioneer Burt who, two hundred years before, had dared the dangers of the wilderness.

"Now we can talk," he said. "Tell me what has happened."

Quickly John Burt related the incidents of the tragedy.

The old man made no sign during the recital, and was silent for minutes after John had ended.

"He deserved to die; and it was written that he should perish by violence; but his blood is not on your head," began the old man calmly. "Murder, in the sight of God is in the heart—not in the hand. I—I am——"

Peter Burt's voice broke, and a shudder swept over him; but he controlled himself, and continued:

"My boy, will you take your grandfather's advice?"

"I will, grandfather—I will!" replied John firmly.

"It is written in God's word, 'If thou faint in the day of adversity, thy strength is small; for a just man falleth seven times, and riseth up again,' said Peter Burt, laying his hand on John's shoulder. "God has willed that you shall be His instrument in great undertakings, and it is decreed that the grave of evil-doers shall not be a stumbling-block to your feet. You are now to go out into the world, and though you may know it not, God will guide your footsteps. It were folly to imagine that this one provoked quarrel points to your undoing. It is the sign that you are at once to depart from fields you have outgrown, to take up your work in that broader sphere which is waiting for you. Something has whispered to me that you should go to California. To-day's event is the sign that you go now. You will start to-night, my boy, and God will be with you. Hush! hear the hoofs of horses!"

The old man pointed to his feet. "Officers are coming!" he said in a low voice. "I will meet them. Go and make here till I return. Hold that horse by the nose lest he whinny."

As John grasped the horse's head, the old man vanished in the darkness.

Peter Burt entered the rear door of his house and was in his room when the tramp of steps was heard followed by loud knocking. The old man waited awhile, as if dressed, and then lighted a lamp and stood in the hallway. The pounding had been repeated at intervals, and gruff voices were heard in impatient conversation.

"Who's there?" demanded the old man.

"We are officers of the law, Mr. Burt," a voice declared. "We want Peter John Burt, your grandson, who has killed a man."

"Have you a warrant for his arrest, or a search warrant?" demanded the old man. "Show me one of the whole lot and I will open the door. If you have none, begone, and let me rest in peace."

A conference followed, and a gruff voice rose in anger.

"Let us in, old man," it thundered. "Warrant or no warrant, let us in, or we'll pound your door down!"

"BOOD BUT DOOR! THERE WERE TWO OF THEM IN THE SHORT RUN."

"Open, in the name of the law!" shouted the officers.

"Hold on, Jessie, good-bye!"

He watched her as she faded away from him and disappeared beyond the vines which shaded the veranda.

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