

IDLE HANDS

By William Freeman

They told George Winfrey that he would have adventures when he came to town, but he didn't believe them, arguing that adventures were just as common in Little Ballham (pop. 755) as in London (pop. 7,549,427), and that if you were for it, you were for it, anyway. And yet...

He first noticed the little blue hat with the shiny buckle as he entered the lift at the Tube station. He could see for the moment the face under the hat, but instinctively felt that it must be an attractive one. And when the lift touched bottom, and the girl, bumped into by a stout woman in furs, half turned, George saw that he was right.

George followed Blue Hat along the platform and into a compartment. Their seats adjoined. This George attributed to the hand of Providence; a critic might have said it was just plain George. It gave him an opportunity of noting that she had grey eyes, a charmingly upturned nose, and a mouth that one wanted to—well, anyway, George wanted to.

She was wearing a well-worn but well-fitting coat with big pockets, and carried an evening paper. But she didn't read it; she kept back in the seat, her eyes half closed. George allowed his thoughts to drift. Suddenly the lights in the compartment flickered, steadied themselves, flickered again, went out. A trivial accident, and nothing to write-home about, George slid his hands into his pockets and heard back and shut his eyes and waited.

On his right he could hear the wheezy breathing of the elderly lady in furs. Something touched George's left hand, something cool and exquisitely soft. Instinctively his fingers closed about it. There was a stifled cry.

"It's all right," said the voice of the ward, misunderstanding. "We'll be all lit up again in 'alf a jiffy." "Glad of it!" snapped the woman in furs. "Not so glad," said George to himself.

He wanted the darkness to last long enough to clear up the mystery of why Blue Hat had been groping in his pocket. He declined, absolutely, to believe that it was anything but sheer accident. He gave the errant fingers a gentle, reassuring squeeze.

"How dare you!" murmured Blue Hat fiercely. The lights blazed up again. George glanced to his left. His heart sank—sank—sank. For it was his hand that was in the pocket at Blue Hat's coat, and not her hand in his.

George heard himself saying brokenly, "I'm most awfully sorry. I thought I was holding your hand." "You were," said Blue Hat, in a hard voice. "Yes, but I thought it was in my own pocket."

"Well, it wasn't." "Exactly—" a square-jawed man on her left joined abruptly in the conversation. "Which is why—" he eyed George with a sardonic smile—"I'll have to ask you to hop out at the next station. Coming quiet? It'll save a heap of trouble."

"But why should I come at all?" rasped George. The square-jawed man, now on his feet, frowned reprovingly. He raised his voice above the rattle of the train. "Any ladies or gents here missed their purses?"

There was a frenzied examination of pockets and handbags. Eight people reported shortages. The square-jawed man listened to their stories, and nodded.

"You'd better come along with me and him to the station," he said to the victims. And at the next stopping-place, George, with his sleeve gripped firmly, was led from the train, and escorted to a forbidding-looking building with a blue lamp outside.

He was taken into the charge-room, and Blue Hat and the three other women and five men were admitted. A sergeant demanded particulars; the square-jawed man, whose name appeared to be Alfred Tebbutt, supplied them. George was told to turn out his pockets, particularly those of his overcoat. He obeyed.

Several purses, and a regular mixed collection of watches, cigarette cases, and jewellery, neatly bundled in a handkerchief, were revealed. "Well, I'm hanged!" said George, feebly.

"Not yet, my lad," said the sergeant, grimly. George, formally charged, was asked if there was anyone he would like to communicate with—his wife, a relation, a solicitor. As he hadn't a wife, as his nearest relations were a hundred miles distant, and as the only solicitor he knew would have left the office and gone home, George's answer was in the negative.

George slept badly—when he slept at all. He had decided to see the thing through on his own, since the only people he knew in London were the manageress of his hotel and a firm of solicitors, whom he met for the first time on the previous day. He was given a plain but fairly generous breakfast, and at a quarter to eleven was ushered into a large room, whose most conspicuous feature was an iron enclosure. Into this, facing a white-haired old gentleman, George was deftly shepherded.

Behind him was a row of seated people who looked like witnesses, and behind them, standing, more people—his audience. On his left was what George assumed, rightly, to be the witness-box. The charge was read. George's certainty that he had only to explain for them to realize the mistake they were making became less certain. Everybody was scrupulously fair—Detective-Sergeant Alfred Tebbutt included. Following a series of complaints concerning pocket-picking at that particular hour on that particular section of

line, he had been instructed to travel as an ordinary passenger and keep watch.

As a result, he had caught George in the act, and forthwith arrested him. "Where is the witness in whose pocket the prisoner's hand is alleged to have been discovered?" asked the magistrate.

"Miss Graham should have been here by now," said the sergeant, frowning. "Graham—that was the name of Blue Hat. And she wasn't married! But engaged, of course. Bound to be!"

A policeman opened the doors and shouted for Miss Graham. The whole court waited. George wondered why she hadn't come, what would happen to her if she hadn't an adequate excuse. The magistrate asked him whether he would like to give evidence on his own behalf. George, on the spur of the moment, said "Yes."

He was halfway to the witness-box when a policeman hurried in and said something to the magistrate. There was a round-table conference in which George wasn't invited to join. The magistrate looked up.

"You are discharged," he snapped. "A mistake has been made. Most unfortunate, most unfortunate!" George, incredulous, found himself free. But he did not leave the court; he wanted to know what had happened.

A woman entered the dock. With a fresh wave of surprise he recognized her as the elderly woman in furs. A policeman gave evidence of arrest. He was followed by Blue Hat. Her other name revealed itself as Mary. She told her story clearly and simply. George's name had appeared and distressed her; she hadn't been able to believe that he was really a pick-pocket. And, still worried, she had recognized the woman in furs among the crowd on the station platform that morning. Some instinct had impelled her to watch. Twice she had seen the woman's fingers busy in other people's pockets. She had followed her and given her in charge.

The sergeant at the station had instantly identified the befuddled lady as one Swanky Jane, an old hand. And Swanky Jane, like the good-natured and experienced pick-pocket that she was, seeing that the game was lost, had owned up frankly. She had recognized Alfred Tebbutt in the train, though he hadn't recognized her, guessed why he was there, and as helpfully as a confessor had transferred her spoils to George's pocket so conveniently near, and made her getaway.

"I was a mug to have worked the same stretch the next day," concluded Jane, contently. Twelve months was her portion. "All what I expected," said Jane, with a radiant smile, as she stepped from the dock.

It was half an hour later. In a nearby restaurant George and Mary were lurching. Lurching and exchanging confidences. Mary, it appeared, was the proprietress of a very small, but very ambitious typewriting agency. She lived in Bloomsbury, and went to the nearest super-cinema every week as an antidote to melancholia.

"What night?" said George. "Mondays, generally," she said. "To-night is Tuesday," said George, wistfully. "And I want to see 'The Girl Who Was Kissed' at the St. George's."

"But that's a theatre," protested Mary. "And the cheapest seats are five-and-nine." "I know," said George. "But I want to celebrate. You see—I haven't mentioned this before, have I?"

"You haven't mentioned anything," said Mary. "Well, Uncle Phineas, out in South America, went and died a few weeks ago, and left me some money. Quite a lot. It came up yesterday from Little Ballham, where I've a farm, to see the lawyers about it. And," concluded George, artfully, "I'll have to stay in London for another week while everything's being settled up—and there's a proverb about idle hands."

A smile twitched at the corner of Mary's mouth. "As long as they're not in other people's pockets," she said. George looked at her, and suddenly he had a vision of Mary sitting at one end of the big oak table in the farm parlor, pouring out the breakfast coffee, and of himself at the other end, carving one of Little Ballham's famous hams, while the lilac bush rustled against the casement outside and the thrush that came every morning mocked them.

The vision passed. With a start, he came back to Bloomsbury, to realize that Mary had been watching him, that by a second miracle she had guessed his thoughts, and that she wasn't angry.

Iodine Content of Eggs Raised By Hungarian Farm-Wife
Budapest—The race, supposed to be exclusively between American and German scientists, to produce an egg containing a large amount of iodine, apparently, has been won by an outsider, Mrs. M. Janosi, a poultry farmer, living in Zengob, near Budapest. It is said that iodine can be far more easily assimilated by the human system if the iodine is administered direct.

Mrs. Janosi is said to have succeeded in producing eggs which contain 0.169 milligramme of iodine without any unusual taste being perceptible. Her purported achievement is regarded as of great importance.

Portrait
But you are green and giving and like grass. Restful and taking rest, so soft you are that when you walk in trees you move among them only as a wind. A stream of life, A rhythm of the air.

—P. A. in the London Spectator

Winter

Thou hold'st the sun A prisoner in the yet undawning east, Shortening his journey between morn and noon, And having him, impatient of his stay, Down to the ree west; but kindly still Compensating his loss with added hours

Of social converse and instructive ease, And gathering at short notice in one group The family dispersed, and fixing thought Not less dispersed by daylight and its cares.

I crown the King of intimate delights, Fire-side enjoyments, home-born happiness, And all the comforts that the lowly roof Of undisturbed retirement, and the hours Of long uninterrupted evening know.

—William Cowper, Poems.

Free Movie Films Offered by Los Angeles Library

Los Angeles.—The National Film Library, in operation less than two months here, loads films without charge. It is only necessary to have a 16-millimeter, or home-size, projector, of which there are many at reasonable prices on the market.

Cost of the film and expenses of the library are paid through the medium of advertising. At the beginning of each subject there is an advertisement which appears on the screen for about a minute. Heretofore, motion pictures in the home have been a luxury that only a few could afford. Both the cost of projectors and the rental of film for an evening's entertainment have made parlor movies prohibitive for the average person.

The free film library is the idea of Mr. Harry C. Leavitt, a Los Angeles man who has been in the film rental business for several years. In telling about the library he said: "Los Angeles is the proving ground for the National Film Library. If it is a successful venture here, we hope eventually to have a branch in every large city. How long it will take us to establish these branches we do not know. It may be 15 months before we have the country completely covered."

The library has a variety of subjects, ranging from educational films to comedies and dramas. The latter are mostly pictures made several years ago, starring former film favorites.

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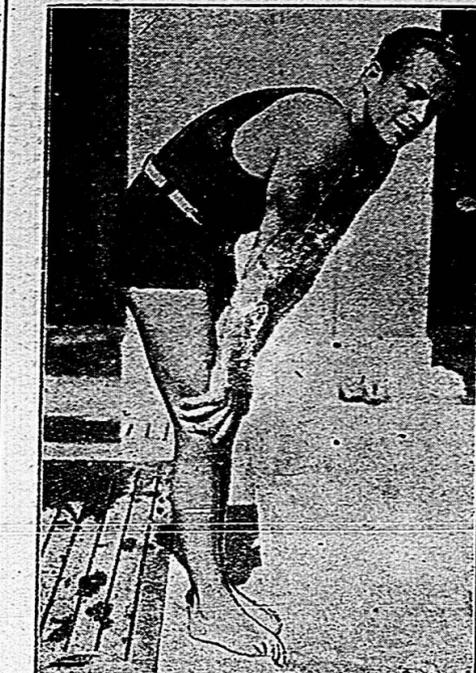
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Argentina's Hope



Well, girls, this good-looking young man, Alberto Zorrilla, comes from Argentina, is 26, won the 400-meter race at the 1928 Olympics and hopes to do better this year.

Unique Well System Installed in Bermuda

Hamilton, Bermuda.—A great engineering achievement came to fulfillment recently with the opening of a system of horizontal wells, capable of supplying millions of gallons of fresh spring water to the colony of Bermuda. These wells have now begun to supply the city of Hamilton. They will soon be extended to care for the water needs of the entire colony.

Bermuda has been dependent upon rainfall as its source of water. The island is the cap of a submerged marine mountain and the water is quickly shed by the rock underlying the soil. Prof. W. D. Turner, of Columbia University, having been called upon for advice on the possibility of developing a permanent supply of water, found that because of the geological stratification of the limestone rock in Bermuda, the water travelled in horizontal veins before finally reaching sea level.

The problem was to intercept these water veins and collect the water in a central pool. A trench, four feet deep and 250 feet long, has been excavated along a hill at a point just above sea level. Interlocking pipes have been laid at the bottom of a pit intercepting the water veins, and this pipe leads to a concrete-bottomed reservoir.

The new plant was officially opened by the Governor, Lieut.-Gen. Sir Thos. Cubitt.

Police Dog Prefers Civilization To Frozen Arctic Wastes

Winnipeg, Man.—Gerta, a pedigreed German police dog, prefers the comforts of civilization to the hardships of the frozen north. The conclusion is obvious, for Gerta has just returned to her former home in Prince Albert, Sask., after a 200-mile hike through forests, across frozen muskeg, ice-ribbed rivers and lakes. Only her natural dog-instinct for direction guided her safely back home on her lone trek through the ice-bound wilderness.

Gerta had been given away by her master to a trapper last fall, and he took her with him to the Smooth Stone Lake area, 160 miles north of Big River. She apparently was content in her new surroundings for several months. Recently, however, she disappeared, but two weeks later woke her original owner in Prince Albert one morning with her scratching and whining at the door.

"Answers" (London).

One River—and No Rain!

A country about the size of England, peopled by agriculturists, but practically without rain, and dependent for its water supply on a single river—that is the province of Sind, in India. Under British rule the primitive canals have been greatly improved and extended, and now the province has the largest irrigation system in the world, with a dam about a mile in length, pierced by sixty-six sluice gate openings, and seven great canals, every one bigger than the Suez. The new system, known as the Lloyd Barrage, has just been opened. The value of the dam is that, during the period when the Indus is normally low, the shutting of the sluice gates will keep the water at a sufficiently high level to feed the canals. Then when the river is in flood the gates will be opened.—"Answers" (London).

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Mexican Kitchens

I wish I could show you a Mexican kitchen. They are quite out-of-the-ordinary. It is a little room with a floor of red bricks. The range is a number of oven-like holes in a ledge of brick and clay, extending two or three feet from the wall with its top about four feet from the floor. Each of the holes is one cooking place. It is filled with charcoal and the draft comes in from an opening underneath. The Mexican cook wants no other stove.

One visitor here recently sent for one of these cooking ranges. He had to tear a hole through the rear wall to make room for the chimney. After setting it up in his daughter's house, he gave instructions that it be used. Later his daughter reported that although the servants had struggled for hours, they could not make the new stove burn. When he went to investigate he found they had built the fire in the oven.

Home baking is almost unknown in Mexico but many of the Indian villages have great ovens which are used in common. The family desiring to bake brings its own fuel, or sometimes several join together in a baking day. The cooking pots, which are sometimes copper, but more often red clay, are set on the live coals, and water is boiled, soups are made, meats are fried, and, in short, first class meals are prepared in this way. The fuel is comparatively cheap, so that a workingman's family can do its cooking on about two cents' worth a day.

—Frank G. Carpenter, in "Mexico."

Fashion Nuggets

Light-weight woolsens continue to grow in favor. The weaves, colorings, and styles are so chic that they walked in where a silk would fear to tread. The colors are as delicate as evening shades. Salmon, pink, azure-blue, and pistache-green are among the shades.

Fabric bags in rough, loose weave will be in demand to carry with the woolen frock or suit. Cotton mesh bags are suitable for the wash frock and novelty crepes and twills for the silk ensemble.

SELF

Some persons can neither stir hand nor foot without making it clear they are thinking of themselves, and laying little traps for approbation.—S. Smith.

Liking For Music

Birmingham.—"A city which can establish a municipal orchestra and maintain it at a time like this is capable of anything in the way of high musical enterprise." Lady Snowden declared at a luncheon given by the Lord Mayor of Birmingham to the executive of the Covent Garden Opera Company.

"I firmly believe that we are in the middle of a renaissance period of the arts," said Lady Snowden, "and that the people of this country, through one instrumentality or another, are beginning to demand music as they have not demanded it for a long time."

Sir Charles Grant Robertson, Vice-Chancellor of Birmingham University, said that Birmingham had recognized the fact that music was indispensable in the cultured life of any nation aspiring to civilization, and had given a lead to the nation by establishing and subsidizing a municipal orchestra.

Just as the primitive wren will fight hard in her nest for her young against the hungry owl, or just as a hen will gather her chickens beneath her wings, and herself bravely meet and repel the swoop of the ravenous eagle, so will maternal affection nerve her who gave us birth to shield us from all dangers which imperil either our bodies or our souls. Hence maternal affection, for this and other reasons, is truly sublime and God-like!—Dr. Davies.

SUCCESS

Blessings multiply by division. We should divide with our less fortunate neighbors.

A PURPOSE

Yet, I doubt not through the age One, increasing purpose runs, And the thoughts of man are wide and wide With the process of the suns.

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WITH THE LONE SCOUTS



Gilwell Beads

All Ontario Lone Scouts, and especially those of the 2nd Troop, will be glad to hear that Scoutmaster Don Hutchison has been awarded his Gilwell Certificate and Beads which were presented to him by Chief Executive Commissioner John Stiles at the recent Provincial Council Annual Meeting held in Toronto.

This certificate shows that Mr. Hutchison has successfully passed the necessary courses of the Scoutmaster's Gilwell Training Course which includes ten days under canvas and which is intended to assist men to train as efficient Scoutmasters. Graduates of this course wear a badge, when in uniform, which consists of two wooden beads, suspended around the neck on a leather bootlace.

We join with all Lones in congratulating Mr. Hutchison.

Lone Scout Work Dedicated

We hear from St. Thomas, Ont., that the members of the 5th St. Thomas Troop attended a dedication service on February 14th at Trinity Church, in that town, when two flower baskets, which were donated to the church last Christmas for permanent decoration in the church, were dedicated.

Will Soon Be a Patrol

We are glad to hear from Colborne and to know that the Lones in that place are still as keen as ever. They have all passed their Tenderfoot Test, and hope to shortly organize into a Patrol. Good work, Colborne. We wish you every success.

Cenotaph Custodians

Boy Scouts are the official custodians of the Cenotaph at Hamilton, Ont. A Scoutmaster and four boys from each troop in turn mark the anniversary by running up new flags. The duty was turned over to the Scouts in consequence of anniversary dates being overlooked at the City Hall.

Perhaps Lone Scouts can undertake this duty in the communities in which they live? Get into touch with the local authorities and suggest it to them. Other duties in connection with the

Fresh Air Fashions

London.—For the spring every woman will be knitting her own jumpers again. A return to knitted sports clothes worn at all hours and on all occasions is imminent.

Once again a fresh air look is to be cultivated, and women lurching in the most exclusive clubs and restaurants of the West-end will look as though they have left their golf clubs in the lounge.

They will not have done so, of course, for their wind-tanned appearance will be purely synthetic. In complement with the new open air modes dark brown cosmetics are already on the market.

No garment has been missed so much from the feminine wardrobe as the woolen jumper, which has been more or less out of fashion for several seasons. It will return in the spring. The new version is short and must be hand-knitted. Many of them will have light colored tops and sleeves joining a darker foundation. Light blue with emerald green and pale pink on dark red are the two smartest combinations.

Accompanying them will be knitted woolen cravat scarves in a three-colored scheme, the smartest being a tricolor design. These scarves are more than fashionable, they are a craze.

Everything that comes under the heading of "woollens" must look thick and home-made, even the suits which are actually man-tailored and pressed to perfection.

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What New York Is Wearing



Flaring sleeves, tightened at the wrists are interesting feature of a jacket-like woolen dress in Spanish tile shade.

The bodice is cut on slightly fitted, basque lines. Brown wooden buttons give a double-breasted effect. The revers are of plain brown woolen. Note the snappy partial belt and the slender gored skirt.

Style No. 2514 may be had in sizes 12, 14, 16, 18, 20 years, 36 and 38 inches bust.

Size 16 requires 3 yards 54-inch with 3/4 yard 35-inch contrasting. A very smart idea you'll like that's rather sporty is to make the skirt of brown diagonal woolen and the bodice of Persian green woolen. Repeat the brown for the revers and sleeve cuffs and trim with brown buttons.

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