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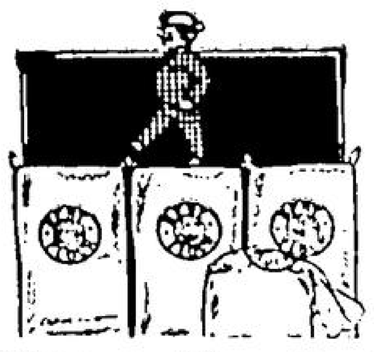

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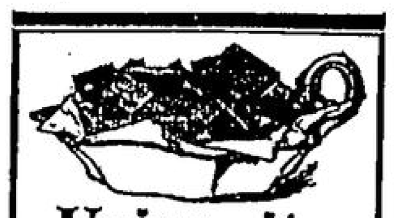

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THE FOOL

"But it isn't playing the game," he said,
And he slammed the books away;
"The Latin and Greek I've got in my head
Will do for a commoner day."
"Rubbish!" I cried. "The bugle's call
Isn't for lads from school."
D'ye think he would listen? Oh, not at all!
So I called him a fool, a fool.

Now there's his dog by his empty bed,
And the flute he used to play,
And his favorite bat * * * but Dick he's dead,
Somewhere in France, they say:
Dick with his rapture of song and sun,
Dick of the yellow hair,
Dicky who's life had but begun,
Carrion-cold out there.

Look at his prizes all in a row;
Surely a hint of fame;
Now he's finished with nothing to show:
Doesn't it seem a shame?
Look from the window! All you see
Was to be his one day;
Forest and furrow, lawn and lea,
And he goes and chucks it away.

Throws it away to die in the dark
Somebody saw him fall,
Part of him mud, part of him blood,
The rest of him—not at all.
And yet I'll bet he was never afraid,
And he went as the best of 'em go.
For his hand was clenched on his broken blade,
And his face was turned to the foe.

And I called him a fool—how blind was I!
Oh, the cup of my grief's abrim!
Will glory o' England ever die
So long as we've lads like him?
So long as we've fond and fearless fools,
Who, spurning fortune and fame,
Turn out with the rallying cry of their schools,
Intent on playing the game.

A fool! Ah, no! He was more than wise,
His was the proudest part.
He died with the glory of faith in his eyes,
And the glory of love in his heart.
And though there's never a grave to tell,
Nor a cross to mark his fall,
Thank God! we know that he "batted well"
In the last great Game of all.

—Robt. W. Service.

THE ANGELS ON THE STAIRS

"WHERE is daddy now?" "When is daddy coming back?" had been little Elsie's constant questions since her father's regiment had been called across the Channel to take part in the awful battles in Flanders.

Elsie was too young to realize the full meaning of war. Mrs. Westgarth had told her that daddy had gone to fight the Germans, and would come back with honor and glory. She had shown her the more cheerful of the pictures in the illustrated papers, but she had kept from the child her own terrible fears.

"Captain Westgarth — missing." had been the official report. What did it mean? Taken prisoner, injured for life—dead? The suspense of a fortnight was far worse than any shock of news—even the worst.

One November evening there came an imperative ring of the telephone. It was an official at the War Office speaking.

"Mrs. Westgarth?" he asked.

"Yes, yes!"

"Your husband is safe."

"Thank God!"

"He is due to arrive at Victoria station at four o'clock to-morrow morning."

"Then he is wounded?"

"We don't know. The information is that he straggled back to our lines, and was sent to hospital at base. It probably means that he is only slightly wounded, and is being sent home to recuperate. If it were anything dangerous he couldn't be moved across the Channel. Don't worry, Mrs. Westgarth. To-morrow morning at four you will have him with you. Good luck!"

There was no need to make preparations in the house for Captain Westgarth's arrival. Ever since he had left for the war his room had been ready for instant hospital service. Everything needful was there. Mrs. Westgarth, a soldier's daughter, had fitted herself for surgical nursing, but she had also a call on a trained nurse to share the vigils. She now 'phoned and arranged that the nurse should meet her at Victoria Station, while the doctor should call at the house early in the morning.

It only remained to tell Elsie that daddy would be with them to-morrow. But the child was fast asleep. It seemed a pity to disturb her rest. Better to give her the happy surprise when daddy was actually in the house.

* * *

Victoria Station in the black hours of the morning was closed to the general public. Outside, in the fog-swathed Buckingham Palace Road, were gathered a dim line of Red Cross motors, private cars, and taxis. Inside, where the sizzling arc-lights thrust through the fog drifting slowly in from riverwards were St. John's ambulance men in their trim uniform of dark blue tunic and puttees; stretchers and wheeled ambulance carriages; and a few of the railway police in the uniform which is usually mistaken for the regular police. Two khakied sentries with fixed bayonets stood impassive at the station entrance.

There were also the relatives and friends of the men returning from the front. The common sorrow drew together into conversation women of all ranks of life.

Fear clutched at their hearts. It is not the superficially wounded, they felt, who arrived in London at the dead hours of the night. Cases too terrible for public sight would be brought at that hour.

In spite of the hopeful words of the official at the War Office, Mrs. Westgarth waited with dread for the arrival of her husband.

A sudden stir and bustle announced that the train was signalled. The police waved into position the first of the line of Red Cross cars and private vehicles. The ambulance men prepared themselves.

The long train crept in very slowly and carefully. There was no perceptible jerk when it stopped. The relatives of the men ran eagerly from carriage to carriage in search of their loved ones.

It was a heartrending scene—and yet, in places, a joyful scene. Some there were who found their worst fears lifted. With others—

Captain Westgarth sat stiffly upright in his compartment. He was not bandaged. An unlighted pipe was set firmly between his teeth. He remained seated, and did not even look out of the window.

"Oh, Frank! It's you at last—and not wounded!" cried Mrs. Westgarth joyfully.

Captain Westgarth turned his head stiffly towards her.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Your wife—Madge."

"I've never seen you before," he said.

An R.A.M.C. man, who had travelled with the train, came up hastily to Mrs. Westgarth and drew her aside.

"Your husband has been mentally injured by a bursting shell," he explained. "It is not the first case we've had. You must be very patient with him."

"Oh, my God! You mean that his mind has gone?"

"No, not that," soothed the Red Cross man. "He will recover in time. It's only a temporary effect."

"But he has been reported missing for over a fortnight. He has been in that condition all this time?"

"There have been other cases like this. No outward sign of injury at all. We take them right away from the scene of war. In his own home, with you to look after him— Now, please, please don't worry! A little patience, and he will be quite his old self again.

Captain Westgarth was being helped out of the compartment by a St. John's man. Suddenly he cowered back.

"Over there!" he cried, pointing to an arc-light where the carbons spluttered. "Another shell! Duck, all of you! Shells all round! They've got our range! Hang you! Let me go!"

* * *

Mrs. Westgarth had prepared herself for everything but this. Her husband recognized neither her nor the home. After the accident of the station he became dull and listless, and suffered himself to be taken to the house and put to bed with entire indifference.

What was to be done with Elsie? It would be cruel to let her see her father in his present state. Better to keep her away. Perhaps in a week's time——

"Daddy is too ill for you to see him just now," the child was told.

Ten days of anxiety almost unendurable ensued. Doctors could do nothing for Captain Westgarth. He would sit in an armchair all day, stiffly upright, an unlighted pipe between his teeth, gazing at nothing, saying nothing. He accepted his wife's presence as that of a paid attendant. He gave no sign of recognition to relatives and friends who were brought to his room.

The doctor, groping for a remedy, had tentatively shown him some war pictures in a daily paper. The only result was to send his temperature leaping and bring on a slight delirium.

Another week, and the situation seemed even more hopeless. Captain Westgarth was sinking into a state of mindless animalism.

Elsie was crying to be taken to her father's room. Mrs. Westgarth, almost distracted, 'phoned to her sister-in-law, and arranged for her to carry away the child the very next day.

But that night Elsie decided on action of her own. She would go to daddy and kiss him well again. From the nursery she would creep down stairs in her nightdress and bare feet.

It was quite dark on the stairs. Elsie was not afraid of the dark. She started to descend cautiously so that no one should hear her.

But a stairboard creaked loudly, and Mrs. Westgarth, from her own room, heard. She came out to the landing, and called up:

"Is that you Elsie? Go back to your room."

"Oh, mummy, look—look!"

Mrs. Westgarth could see nothing unusual.

"Look at what?" she asked.

"The angels, mummy! They are going up and down the stairs; so many of them!"

Mrs. Westgarth caught her breath sharply.

"You are frightened, dear. Come and sleep with me to-night," she answered.

"I'm not frightened at all, mummy. The angels looked so kind. Can't you see them?"

The child came down fearlessly, joyfully, making way on the stairs for the transcendental figures which only she could see. It brought a chill of fear to Mrs. Westgarth's heart. Could these be the messengers of death?

Elsie reached the landing by her father's room. She held out her hands in prayer to an unseen figure.

"Please make daddy well!" she pleaded.

It was as though the figure offered a hand and Elsie grasped it. Mrs. Westgarth, stupefied, remained stock-still as the child went to the door of Captain Westgarth's room and entered.

The figure entered, too.

"Daddy is in here," said the child, and closed the door.

The mother scarcely knew what she ought to do. Should she interfere? Angels—nonsense, of course! And yet Elsie could see them.

Mrs. Westgarth listened at the closed door. She could faintly hear Elsie in childish prayer by the father's bedside. Then silence. She waited, heedless of the cold, a full half-hour. Then she turned the handle and entered on tiptoe.

The child lay in bed with her father, snuggling close to him. Both were fast asleep.

* * *

Early in the morning Mrs. Westgarth entered her husband's room and pulled up the blind.

He stirred drowsily and opened his eyes.

"Hello, Madge!" said he. "Had such a queer dream last night. Thought there was an angel stroking my forehead. Must have been you, I suppose. What's the news of Kaiser Bill? Got him on the run, what?"—London Answers.

Wise mothers who know the virtue of Mother Graves' Worm Exterminator always have it at hand, because it proves its value.

Heaven has no crowns for wills surrendered to wishes.

THE MAGNETISM OF CHEERFULNESS

THOSE who are looking for friends are seeking cheerful people. A gloomy face is like a sign on a country road which warns us that it is dangerous passing. Only the most courageous will deliberately seek the friendship of those who view all life through blue glasses.

On the other hand, sunny people are magnets that attract hearts. You can hardly keep your eyes from the face that is radiantly cheerful. You are sure you will like the worker in the office who gets caught in a shower the first day and comes in smiling. You will forgive a great many things in a cheerful person which it would be next to impossible to overlook in one who is sour and morose.

The proverb tells us that one who would have friends must show himself friendly. He must also show himself cheerful. One is almost as necessary as the other.

THE MOTHER'S WAR SACRIFICE

"My husband is home on his last leave, he goes away to-morrow morning," said my friend.

The husband goes away with the full knowledge that he may never return; he casts a wistful glance about his beloved home. "It will be a long time before I see this dear place again."

He looks tenderly at his boys and puts his arm around his daughter as he says, "You will be much taller, dear, when I get back."

His wife is the hardest to part with, but when it is done he goes away busy and hopeful, surrounded by sights and sounds that are new and awakening.

The wife in the meantime, after her brave deportment of the last days together, runs to her room after the tearless good-bye has been said, and, locking her door, sobs out her grief for the one so dear, so long to be parted, who may never hold her in his arms again.

Then at last she gets up, looks long at her husband's photograph, and puts it down lovingly on her dresser. Her youngest son calls "mother!" and tries her door. She lets him in. He rushes into her arms. "You will be brave and good, like papa?" she whispers, as she smooths his hair and holds him tight. And he promises, and they feel very near to each other.

Thus the new life without father, without husband, begins. Everything about the house reminds them of the absent dear one. He is recalled to their minds times without number each day. Even the youngest feels the tragedy in the elusive answers to his "When will papa come home?"

The people who have no loved ones at the front do not realize the sacrifices that are being made for them. The dearest of material things to most women is her home. She is the centre, the ruler of it. Everything there depends upon her desires.

Yet many women are giving up their homes as well as their husbands. Sometimes it is because there is not sufficient financial means to maintain it; sometimes, if there is only one child or none, the house seems too lonely without the strong presence when the day's work is done. They move into their mother's home or their married sister's.

What a mother feels when her son goes to the war has been recorded in the diary of a gifted Frenchwoman.

Her son was taking his military training before the war began, and she was afraid he would not be allowed to come to see her before he went to the war. But one day a car drove up and he jumped out and rushed into her arms—just for a few minutes at home.

'Oh, mother, mother," he cried, "I did so want to see you. And, now I've seen you, I'm ready to go when the bugle calls."

The mother writes afterwards in her diary: "I could not speak; I was choking. I looked at this dear, big, handsome boy, who is my only child, my whole life, whom I must give to France, must sacrifice perhaps to the inexorable laws of war. I did not say anything, however, for it would have depressed him."

When for a long time she hears nothing from him and she knows in what danger he is, she writes thus, heart-brokenly:

"Why do we have children? So that they should be torn from us by war, or should go off on their own accord and build their nests elsewhere? It is cruel, but is is the way of life; our children only belong to us as long as they need us.

One must not conceal from oneself that mother's love is in no way reciprocal—it is merely a gift. There is nothing left for us but the value of our sacrifice."

"The value of our sacrifice"—this lends dignity and added character to the women who have given to their country their sons and husbands.—Sel.

A NEW ARRIVAL IN TOWN

I'm a little baby. I arrived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Skinner last Sunday morning. Although I have only been in this world a few days, I'll have you know that I'm the boss at our house. Whenever I want anything all I have to do is to raise my voice, then everybody works overtime to find out what I want. I watch 'em and blink at 'em and crow. Its jolly fun. My daddy says I'm a little Chinese, and that I only weigh eight pounds. But then I don't think he's so big. He made his brag that he will have me working with him in the greenhouse before many months, but I'll fool him. I'll lose my guess if I don't give him cold feet before the winter is over by making him get up in the middle of the night for the paregoric and he will frost his ears going to the drug store for Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup. I am the owner of a very nice voice which I cultivate every night. If you don't believe it, just ask the neighbors. Some day I am going to join a church choir. Then there will be "something doing." Owing to my late arrival in town, I have not yet gone into society. Dr. Armstrong called on me and was quite pleasant. He was my first caller.—Little Eight Pounder.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From Our Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, Dec. 7th, 1896

Hot air pipes have been put in the cells at the town hall.

J. A. Speight has just completed an immense circular tank for Beardmore & Co. to hold soft water for use in the boiler. It is 24 ft. in diameter, and 12 feet deep. Over 3000 feet of two inch cedar plank was used. It has 167 staves and will hold 160 tons of water.

Knox Church Sunday School scholars have fallen in with the idea of having a New Year's tree for poor children in certain parts of the land.

Mr. J. V. Kannawin has sent to Rev. Mr. McPherson an interesting account of the trip to California and of their present surroundings at Tropico, five miles from Los Angeles. "The climate is perfect, I am out nearly all the time, and am sitting on the lawn as I write. I feel that I am now on the road to complete recovery."

Mrs. (Dr.) Christopher Russell, of Ballinafad, who died on November 17th, was of a family of Stewarts, early settlers in the Scotch Block, Esquesing, and who were actively identified with the MacKenzie movement against the Family Compact. Her brother, John Stewart, led a company of sixty men to Toronto to aid MacKenzie in his resistance to the oppression. After MacKenzie's defeat John was a state prisoner and his sister was an eye witness to her brother's home being looted by the Loyalists. At the time she had the care of a blind father, and a mother with a fractured limb, and her sister-in-law in bed from recent illness. In 1844 she married Dr. Russell, and they moved to the farm in Erin near Ballinafad. She was a devout and consistent Presbyterian, and passed away at 91 years. Mr. Christopher Russell, on the homestead left by his parents, is the only surviving member of the household.

DIED

FISH—At Erin Mills, on December 4th, Elizabeth Hardwell, wife of John Fish, aged 71 years, 6 months.

ROBINSON—In Erin, on December 6th, Mary Jane Glover, wife of John Robinson, aged 34 years, 9 months.

SWINDLEHURST—At Georgetown, on December 6th, Janie Grant, wife of William Swindlehurst, aged 34 years.

MOFFAT—At the home of her husband, lot 27, con. 6, Esquesing, on December 3rd, Christina, wife of Christopher Moffat, aged 63 years.

AN EMBARASSMENT OF RICHES

There are a great many interesting things to do in the world. There are any number of worthy causes which we would be glad to help along. Most of us are conscious of possessing more than one talent, of having the ability to make a success of more than one line of work.

But this embarassment of riches sometimes results unfortunately, for while there are any number of things to do, there are only twenty-four hours a day in which to do them, and out of the twenty-four, sensible people take one-third for sleep, and another third for eating and drinking, air, exercise and the necessary relaxation, the number of things one can do in an eight-hour day is strictly limited.

There is a danger that ambitious young people will try to crowd too many interests into that eight hours. They will learn too many things and no one to the bottom. They will do too many things and no one very well. They will talk about any numbers of things, and no one very accurately. In short, they will have a smattering of knowledge and efficiency, when the world asks for thoroughness. One of the constant surprises is that the people who seem so well informed, who, as we declare admiringly, "Can turn their hands to almost anything," are often hard put to it to earn their bread and butter, while somebody else with only one talent, and that an insignificant one, pushes it through to a splendid success.

There is no demand for workers with a smattering of knowledge along a dozen lines, for those who can do any number of things rather poorly. Find your most promising gift, the talent which fits in most perfectly with the practical needs of this practical world and cultivate that.

WISDOM

A priest one Sunday was showing off his class and proceeded to ask one little boy in the presence of the archbishop: "What is matrimony?"

The little boy's eyes bulged out at the suddenness with which the question was put, and then he said mechanically: "Matrimony is a state of punishment to which some souls are condemned to suffer for a while before they are considered good enough for heaven."

"Tut, tut," said the priest, "that is the definition of purgatory."

"Let him alone," said the archbishop. "He may be right—what do you and I know about it, anyway?"

The smaller an estate the fewer legal questions are involved.

MESSAGE FROM THE TRENCHES

Don't you hear the call from the trenches?
It is not the weak call of fear,
'Tis the call from those war-worn heroes
Which all loyal men surely hear.

They are calling for reinforcements,
And all that they ask is fair play,
They should get our best men in thousands,
Why should there be any delay?

While we sit here in impotent weakness,
Our boys simply crack with the strain,
Recruiting must quickly be doubled,
And only the weak will remain.

The lads who first flocked to the colors,
They rest neither day nor by night,
Arise, all ye men who have courage,
For God's sake get into this fight!

Arise, oh ye men of the mountains,
The rivers, and prairies and glen,
Be true to the land of your fathers,
And prove to the world that you're men.

!—T. H. Litster.

AS GOOD AS HIS UNIFORM

The car was already crowded when a bent old Irishwoman clambered aboard with a large basket, heavy with the results of her marketing. As she started into the car the conductor stopped her.

"Here! You'll have to leave that basket out here on the platform. There's no room for it inside."

The old woman began to expostulate, as she blocked the door with her stout form and the awkward basket. "I'll not be lavin' it out here, for anybody to make off wid it. Can't you show a little consitheration for an ould woman?"

The conductor grinned, but was firm.

"Hurry up, ye're blockin' the door," he reminded her.

She was obviously worried, and her forehead knotted anxiously between her faded blue eyes. A boy of fourteen or so in the uniform of a boy scout, who was seated in the corner by the door, rose.

"You sit here," he said to the woman, "and I'll watch your basket.

She shook her head obstinately.

"I've lived in this town too long to be thrustin' every Tom, Dick and Harry. Like enough ye'd think twas a fine joke to be runnin' off wid an ould woman's dinner."

The occupants of the car were by this time interested and amused. The conductor showed signs of irritation.

"Oh, go on!" he said. "The boy's all right. He'll take good care of your stuff." And the old woman subsided, with now and then an anxious glance at the platform where the khaki-clad figure stood guard over the basket.

When she rose to leave the car the boy picked up the basket.

"I'll carry it for you—it's pretty heavy, I guess," he said, and they walked off side by side.

"Who is the lad a man asked, as the conductor gave the signal to go ahead. "I don't know who he is—never saw him before. But I know what that suit of clothes stands for. There aren't many things you can depend on in this city, but you can trust that every time.—Youth's Companion.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

To the Editor:

One of the benefits we may expect from prohibition of the liquor traffic will be improved hotel accommodation, and it cannot come any too soon. Commercial travellers tell strange tales of many hotels in license days, but they are high in their praises of most of the hotels in prohibition towns. One who has travelled over the same district for 23 years tells me of the improvement he observed in hotels wherever local option came and the most thorough investigation confirms these statements. He says that charges are a little higher in barless hotels but it is worth the money.

When a hotel keeper said that he would have to close when prohibition came in it was an admission that he was not a hotel keeper at all, but a saloon-keeper. There were too many such doing nothing but harm. It was shown in the legislature that out of 110 hotels in Toronto there were only 30 that entertained travellers and in other cities the proportion was worse. It is entirely unfair to boarding houses and temperance houses that do not sell liquor.

The question is sometimes asked: "Can the hotel business be made to pay without the bar?" The answer is that it has already been done. Prince Edward Island has been under prohibition for over ten years and the hotels are reported to be satisfactory and prosperous. In Montreal, Toronto, and other places, good temperance hotels have been conducted for many years. I know, because I have stopped at them. The last time I was in Owen Sound I stopped at a hotel that might satisfy the most fastidious and I am told that the Owen Sound hotels are paying good dividends. But before local option came to Owen Sound, a woman had demonstrated that a bar-less hotel could be made to pay and pay well in competition with the hotel that sold poisonous liquors. In two-thirds of the municipalities of Ontario the hotels did not sell liquor and they seemed to be doing very well. On the other side of the line there are 23 States and hundreds of other municipalities that have barless hotels and they seem to be doing well. Maine has had barless hotels for over sixty years and Kansas for over thirty years. Then why ask, can hotels be made to pay without a bar?

Doubtless charges have been increased in a good many small towns, but what kind of a man is he who wants the drinking man to pay part of his hotel bill? Who wants his hotel bill lessened at the expense of suffering, poverty and crime?

The fact is that hotel-keeping is one of the best paying businesses when properly conducted. This is proved by such instances as I have mentioned where barless hotels have been successfully conducted in competition with the licensed hotel.

H. Arnott, M.B., M.C.P.S.

A Pill that Proves its Value.—Those of weak stomach will find strength in Parmelee's Vegetable Pills, because they serve to maintain the healthful action of the stomach and the liver, irregularities in which are most distressing. Dyspeptics are well acquainted with them and value them at their proper worth. They have afforded relief when other preparations have failed, and have effected cures in ailments of long standing where other medicines were found unavailing.