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The Acton Free Press

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YOUNG FELLOW MY LAD

"Where are you going, Young Fellow My Lad,
On this glittering morn of May?"
"I'm going to join the colors, Dad;
They're looking for men, they say."
"But you're only a boy, Young Fellow My Lad;
You aren't obliged to go."
"I'm seventeen and a quarter, Dad,
And ever so strong, you know."

"So you're off to France, Young Fellow My Lad,
And you're looking so fit and bright."
"I'm terribly sorry to leave you, Dad,
But I feel that I'm doing right."
"God bless you and keep you, Young Fellow My Lad,
You're all my life, you know."
"Don't worry. I'll soon be back, dear Dad,
And I'm awful proud to go."

"Why don't you write, Young Fellow My Lad?
I watch for the post each day;
And I miss you so, and I'm awfully sad
And it's months since you went away.
And I've had the fire in the parlor lit,
And I'm keeping it burning bright
Till my boy comes home, and he's I sit
Into the quiet night."

"What is the matter, Young Fellow My Lad?
No letter again to-day.
Why did the post man look so sad,
And sigh as he turned away?
I hear them tell that we've gained now ground,
But a terrible price we've paid;
God grant, my boy, that you're safe and sound;
But oh I'm afraid, afraid."

"They've told me the truth, Young Fellow My Lad,
You'll never come back again;
(Oh, God! the dreams and the dreams I've had,
And the hopes I've nursed in vain!)
For you passed in the night, Young Fellow My Lad;
And you proved in the cruel test
Of the screaming shell and the battle hell
That my boy was one of the best."

"So you'll live, Young Fellow My Lad,
In the gleam of the evening star.
In the wood-note wild and the laugh of a child,
In all sweet things that are.
And you'll never die, my wonderful boy,
While life is noble and true;
For all our beauty and hope and joy
We will owe to our lads like you"
—Service.

That Miserable Fox

By Edward T. Martin

CHARLES OLCOTT, 16 years old, with his mother and two young brothers, lived on a homesteader's claim in Alberta, north of Edmonton. The claim, consisting of 160 acres of fertile valley land, had been taken several years previously by his father, who, unused to hard work, had passed into the Great Beyond and left his family alone in the struggle to pay money borrowed for improving the claim and to purchase live-stock, farming implements and seeds. It was a heavy burden, but one they had so far borne successfully.

"We are not so badly off, mother," Charlie said one morning after breakfast. "We are going to have a big crop which will sell for enough to pay the $200 due in October, besides leaving plenty for supplies and clothes for winter; then in one year more we can prove up and the place is ours."

"That is all right, son," Mrs. Olcott answered. You know I have never worried about the farm. What most troubles me is your education. It will not do for my boys to grow up in ignorance. In these times education is everything."

"Well, mother," the boy replied, half laughing, half seriously, "don't get discouraged. We must do our best and trust to Providence for the rest. Cheer up. Cheer up."

"Hey! Charlie! Charlie! Come quickly," shouted twelve-year-old Jimmie poking his head in at the kitchen door. "A fox is after the goose again."

"Oh, that miserable fox!" moaned Mrs. Olcott. "Hurry, Charlie."

Needless advice, for gun in hand, he was already in the yard, but too late, for the animal was through the fence and away, carrying, slung across its back, a half-grown goose.

"I'll put a stop to that kind of work," Charlie said savagely to his brother. "This is the third one taken." Then, throwing a bridle over the head of White Nose, his horse, and unchaining Old Nim the hound, he started after the goose stealer.

The trail led at first along the creek bottom, where the fox, hard pressed, dropped its dinner, then took to broken ground and finally, climbing a rocky hill, ran into its den only a jump ahead of the hound.

Charlie, now following on foot, found the dog by turns baying loudly, then nosing the hole, shoving his head in as far as possible, then withdrawing it and digging at the flinty hillside to enlarge the opening until his paws bled. "Got him, old boy?" Charlie asked the dog, who whimpered and wagged his tail as if trying to answer. "Yes, but I don't know how we are to get him out."

The boy had not been gone from the house half an hour when an auto puffed up to the front gate and Albert Stowell, money lender and banker in a small way, whose place of business was the nearest village, came up the walk to the house.

"Mrs. Olcott," he said, when seated in the small front room, "I have come to see about the note and mortgage I hold."

"Yes," she replied. "There is $200 due in October and $200 a year later, besides some interest. I think we can meet the payments when they come due. You need have no fear of receiving your money."

"Interest—ah—you spoke of interest," the man said, hesitatingly. "You see, under conditions of the mortgage, if interest is not paid promptly, at my option, the whole principal as well as interest becomes due. You are five days late in paying the last quarter's interest and I have chosen to call in the loan. The whole amount is $507.75 and must be paid within 30 days or I shall foreclose on your horses, cattle, farm implements and growing crop."

"I, why, why, you never, never would think of doing a thing like that. It would leave us nothing to—to work the place with," the astonished woman managed to say, then continued, "I thought a day or two would make no matter. It wasn't convenient to go to town, we were busy. I'll—pay you now."

"Not unless you pay the full amount the man growled, "but to show I am fair you can sign the property over to me—and—if—if you include the claim, I—let me see—yes—I'll buy tickets back to the States for you and the boys and give—yes I'll do it give you a hundred dollars in money besides. Now that is what I call being liberal, very liberal. Yes, indeed."

"Liberal!" the woman exclaimed, angrily. "We've put $2,000 cash into the place besides our labor, and the claim, as soon as we get title, is worth $3,000 more, and you talk about $100 No, sir. I will sign nothing over. Now go. Get out quickly or I'll set the dog on you."

"You will, eh?" Stowell exclaimed. "Well, you'll be sorry. I'll not give you one cent now, and after I've taken my property away you can stay and starve." With that he hurried to his car, glancing back as he went to see if Mrs. Olcott had made good her threat and called the dog.

"Charlie, what shall we do?" cried his mother when he came in, flushed and excited from his fox hunt. Then with tears in her eyes, she told of Stowell's demands, asking him again, "What shall we do?"

"I don't know, mother. Let me just think," he replied.

At supper time he advised, "You take Doll and Joe and drive to Edmonton in the double buggy. Try Mr. Hobs, the banker. (Father used to know him. See if he will buy the mortgage. If he will not, write to your folks, east; maybe they will lend you the money."

"But, Charlie," she objected, "it would take two days going, ten more to send a letter east and get an answer. Why, I'd be gone two full weeks. Who would keep house for you? Who would do the cooking?"

"Whom do you suppose?" he asked; then without waiting for a reply "Your oldest son, of course."

"Huh!" said Jimmie, with scorn, "I see our finish. When you come back, mother, you will find me gone. Hired out as a living skeleton in a museum."

Nevertheless soon after daylight the next morning, Mrs. Olcott began her long trip and Charlie was installed as cook.

Money was scarce at Edmonton and Mrs. Olcott was unsuccessful there. Nor were her brothers able to help, and, sad at heart, she started homeward, after the expected absence of two weeks.

When nearly home, as she stopped on a rise of ground and saw the farm all spread before her, beautiful in the green of a growing crop of waving wheat, she felt she could not give it up. "The most fertile tract of land in all the great north-west," her husband had often said. But what was she to do?

Near the pasture gate through which a road led to the house, she overtook Jimmie. He had seen her coming and was waiting for a lift.

"Hullo, Jimmie boy," she greeted him. "What have you in that heavy sack? Throw it into the buggy and climb in after it and tell me all the news. You seem to have done well on brother's cooking. How do you like it?"

"He—he hasn't done much lately," the boy answered. "You see he's got two boarders and—and they've got a lot of canned stuff and we've been living high. Only they ain't got no—I mean haven't got any potatoes; so they sent me over to Henson's to buy some, and there's two dollars worth in that bag. Gee, they must be rich, spending all that money just for potatoes."

"Boarders," said his mother. "Boarders up here. Who are they? What do they want?"

"Dunno," Jimmie replied. "They go hunting with Charlie every day, only they ain't—haven't, I mean—got any guns."

Mrs. Olcott found the house surprisingly clean; floors freshly scrubbed, dishes washed, beds neatly made, not any of the disorder she expected to see.

She killed a chicken and made supper ready and about the time the potatoes were boiling Charlie and his boarders rode up.

"Yes, ma'am, we're from Pennsylvania," one said, on being introduced. "Are doing a little hunting and we sorter liked that boy of your's we've been boarding with him. S'pose we'll have to move now. Camp out, I guess."

"Oh, no," the lady quickly replied. "We will manage. The boys can sleep in the hayloft."

"Won't that be fun," all three exclaimed at once.

"Hut, mother," Charlie said. "tell us about your trip. Did you—"

"No, son, I did not. Everything just went wrong."

"Too bad. Too bad," he replied, but did not seem as downhearted as his mother supposed he would.

When the meal was finished, Charlie laughed and said: "Mother, don't you dare go near the little hen house. Mr. Jones here has two little baby foxes he's feeding and trying to tame. When they are old enough he wishes to take them east. You know we dug out the old robber fox and these are her babies. She was stealing our geese to feed them."

"Poor old fox. Now she has lost her babies. I am sorry for her," said Jimmie.

"And her home, too," added Charlie.

"Which I feel is what will happen to us," Mrs. Olcott continued, her eyes filled with tears.

"Never despair, ma'am. Never despair," comforted Mr. Jones. "When I was a boy and went to Sunday School, they used to sing a hymn. Don't exactly remember how it went Something like this, 'For God works in mysterious ways his wonders to perform.' Don't get downhearted; things may not be as bad as they look."

The day when the money must be paid came all too soon.

"Not going hunting any more. Going to start back east. The foxes are big enough to be moved safely. Will stay around though and see that loan shark does not take anything that isn't in the mortgage," Jones announced at breakfast.

Just at eleven Stowell came bringing a constable. With a swagger he went into the room where Mrs. Olcott sat crying. The boys were there also, trying to look sober, but constant smiles kept chasing their gloom back away. The constable followed Mr. Stowell into the room and addressed Mrs. Olcott: "Lady, under the law I am compelled to demand payment of this note, else I must proceed to sell the goods covered by the mortgage securing it."

"Oh, Mr. Stowell," she cried, "be merciful. Leave us something. A cow, a horse, a plow. Don't strip the farm bare."

"Not a thing will I leave that I have a right to take," Stowell answered. "Set the dog on me, I think you said. Dog, eh?"

"What is the whole amount due?" Charlie asked of the officer.

"Never mind talking to him," Stowell shouted angrily. "I'll show him how he stands in five minutes more."

"I have a right to know, and demand you tell me the full amount due," the boy spoke stoutly.

"Well," the constable replied, "I suppose it's no harm telling you the note with interest is $507.75. After the sale my fees will be added to it."

"There will be no sale," Charlie answered. "Here is your money," passing him a roll of bills.

"Hey! Don't take that. It's—it's counterfeit, or else stolen. Don't take it, I say," called Stowell.

"Seems all right," the officer said taking and counting it; then he passed note and mortgage to the boy, who in turn gave them to his mother.

"Charlie, Charlie, where did you get so much money?" asked the astonished woman.

"Tell you presently, ma," he answered, going to the door and calling, "Nim, Here, Nim. Sic him, boy," and, as the dog with a bark of joy came bounding into the room, Stowell went out of the window, into his auto and was soon rolling up the road, leaving the constable to bring the money and find his way back as best he could.

"You see, ma'am," Jones told Mrs. Olcott, when things had become quiet, "those young foxes are very valuable. We are out here buying black foxes for a fur farm in Pennsylvania. Your boy knew where a den was. We dug them out and divided equally with him his share being just $5,000. He's got the rest hidden somewhere, eh, kid?" and Charlie laughed.—The Round Table.

"EASY TO GET IN A WRONG POSITION"

Carleton James drew a long breath of satisfaction as he gazed across the sunlit links, smiling grimly as he noted the numerous bunkers, the sand traps, and the other obstacles which must be either avoided or overcome by the ambitious golfer.

"You'll find me appallingly green at the game, Kingman," he said, turning to his companion; "but you're not to show me any indulgence. I want to learn right."

"Good!" Kingman acquiesced. "We won't attempt to go over the whole course to-day, but we'll give you a chance to get your bearings and size things up. To-day you want to pay particular attention to your stance."

"My stance?" the other repeated in a puzzled tone.

"Your position for playing. You'll find that a correct stance is an important factor in playing a really good game."

Together they strode across the links to a deserted teeing ground, and there Carleton took his first lesson in golf. He was instructed just how to stand in making his drive, the relative positions of the left and the right foot, the proper distance from the ball, the distance between the two feet. When at last he made his first drive, it was with creditable results. The little white ball soared gracefully into the air and came down many rods away, safely to one side of a marshy piece of ground which constituted a difficult and annoying hazard.

"Good for you!" his instructor approved. "You seem to have naturally a very good stance, James. You'll want to keep watch of yourself, though. Until you've established your playing habits it's easy, in a stress of a difficult shot to get into a wrong position."

For a few moments Carleton did remarkably well for a beginner. Then came a succession of shots each of which advanced the ball only a few feet.

"You're forgetting your stance," called Kingman, whose ball lay a short distance away. "You're playing too much off your right foot. Get back into the proper stance and see if you won't do better."

Following the instructions, Carleton made a shot that was fairly satisfactory, clearing easily a group of small, mound-shaped bunkers jokingly termed the "chocolate drops."

"It's surprising what a difference your stance makes in your play," he said, to which Kingman rejoined "Right you are! I'm inclined to think it is the important factor, instead of an important factor as I told you a few minutes ago. We'll play the next four holes if you like, and then I'm afraid I shall have to turn my face toward home, as we're to have company to dinner this evening."

It was perhaps a month later that Carleton James sought out his friend Kingman.

"I want your help again, Kingman," he explained. "It's something more important than golf this time. You know that tough district over in the east end of our ward—saloons, gambling places, pool rooms, and so on? There's a good chance of cleaning it out if all the decent fellows in the ward unite in 'a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull all together.' We can count on you to help, can't we, Kingman?"

To his great surprise, the young man to whom he had appealed hesitated.

"Don't you think you're undertaking more than you can carry through, James?" he asked at last. "There have to be such districts, you know, and once they're established, it is practically impossible to clean them out."

"Do you think they're beneficial to a community, or desirable in any way?" Carleton asked quietly.

"Beneficial? Desirable? What an absurd question, James!"

"Then why should they be necessary?" Carleton persisted. "If enough people in a community are opposed to them they can be driven out. The important thing is to line up the people who are opposed to them. Surely, Kingman, you'll be found standing on our side."

But he could not secure any promise of support from the other. Kingman had what seemed to him good reasons for failing to ally himself with the forces that were fighting to eliminate the tough district to which Carleton had referred. He was not sure that it would be wise, for business reasons, to drive out the saloon-keepers and their hangers-on; he doubted whether the force lined up for the battle was strong enough to accomplish its purpose; he felt that his influence would be too slight to make it worth while for him to put himself to any inconvenience in the matter.

Carleton at last turned away in keen disappointment. "It's queer," he said to himself. "that Kingman should lay so much stress on the importance of a correct stance in golf, and yet be so indifferent to his own stand in regard to the vital problems of life."—Alice Griggs Goode.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, May 26, 1898

Alex. Waddle, Esq., left samples of barley in head and clover in bloom at this office yesterday.

A movement is on foot on the part of our local merchants to have the streets watered during the four summer months. Negotiations are being made with Mr. John Williams.

The Methodist Sunday School rendered the cantata, "The Arch of Fame" in the Church on the Queen's birthday. Shortly after eight o'clock the Sunday School orchestra opened the cantata. The Universal King, in the person of the Superintendent of the Sunday School, made the introductory address and the sixty-eight numbers proceeded up to and including the climax, when the Universal King surrendered his throne, the monarchs laid crowns at the feet of Christianity and the Arch of Fame bore, instead of the names of the monarchs, the inscription, "Jesus, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords." The various parts were taken by the following, each in uniform suiting the character: Czar of Russia, Mr. C. Williams; President of United States, Mr. I. Francis; Prince of India, Mr. James Cheyne; German Emperor, Mr. Fred Nixon; Italy, Mr. Thos. Brunt, Jr.; France, Mr. R. J. Edmiston; Japan, Mr. A. E. Gurney; Austria, Mr. Joseph Boyd; Queen Victoria, Miss Lizzie McLean, followed by her pages, Masters Charlie Matthews and Willie Kenney. Miss Annie Stephenson personified Canada. Miss Minnie Nelson was Christianity and was accompanied by twelve soldiers of the Cross: Misses Edna Miller, Bertie Mann, Emma Noble, Nellie Moore, Flora McNabb, Alice Thomas, Edith Wilson, Eva Williams, Bella Stephenson, Nettie Clark, Maggie Matthews, and Fanny Bryden. The elocutionary part was taken by Misses Mina Walker, Clara Moore and Maggie Wilson.

Acton Cornet Band gave an entertaining open air concert on the streets Saturday evening.

The holiday rate to Toronto was fifty cents for return ticket, good for three days. This is what the rate war did for the passengers.

BORN

VANATTER—In Erin, on May 15, to Mr. and Mrs. Ira B. Vanatter, a son.
McKEAGUE—In Acton, on May 6, to Dr. and Mrs. S. A. McKeague, a son.

DIED

TOST—In Georgetown, on Friday, May 13, Henry Tost, Councillor.
GLADSTONE—In England, on May 19, Hon. William Ewart Gladstone.

A WOMAN'S INGENUITY

A Dublin chambermaid is said to have got twelve commercial travellers into eleven bedrooms, and yet to have given each a separate room. Here we have the eleven separate bedrooms: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11

"Now," she says, "if two of you will go into No. 1 bedroom and wait a few minutes I'll find a spare room for you as soon as I have shown the others to their room." Well, now, having thus bestowed two gentlemen in No. 1 she put the third in No. 2, the fourth in No. 3, the fifth in No. 4, the sixth in No. 5, the seventh in No. 6, the eighth in No. 7, the ninth in No. 8, the tenth in No. 9, the eleventh in No. 10. She then came back to No. 1, where you will remember she left the twelfth gentleman alone with the first, and said, "I've accommodated all the rest and have still a room to spare, so if you will step into No. 11, you will find it empty." Thus the twelfth man got his bedroom. Of course, there is a hole in the saucepan somewhere, but we leave the reader to determine exactly where the fallacy is, with just a warning to think twice before declaring as to which, if any, of the travellers was the "odd man out."

OUR OWN HANDIWORK

Some people boast of being self-made as if they were rare exceptions. But, as a matter of fact, each of us is the product of his own efforts. The influences which come to us mold us only as we give them leave. The kindest and wisest friends cannot make us good against our will, and the most injurious influences do us harm only when we make them welcome. In the last analysis we are our own handiwork. And many of the defects we recognize might have been avoided, if the workman had take more pains.

LET THEM LAUGH

"Well, let them laugh!" said sturdy Johnny Brown
"I wouldn't mind if all the men and boys in this whole town
Should laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh
Because I never smoke the poisonous cigarette, nor quaff
Wine, ale, or beer!
What is there in a laugh, or even in a sneer,
That any honest temperance boy should fear?

"A laugh is only just a little air and noise
Mixed up to frighten weak-kneed boys
Into a course of wrong. Alas,
That any boy should fear a little gas!
A moral coward such a boy must be,
Lacking in common sense and vertebre,
Unmindful of his highest destiny.
—Selected.

CAME TOO LATE

She was a good wife; there was nothing unusual in that.

She looked upon her husband as a demigod; there was nothing unusual in that.

He looked upon himself as an absolute god; and there was nothing unusual in that.

For fifteen years she had been a perfect wife and mother, living absolutely for her home and family, and thinking only of their welfare and happiness.

She demanded little in return for her loving service, and the family had come to take it for granted, and to enjoy the belief that constant self-sacrifice was mother's pleasure.

Then, one day, as gently and sweetly as she had lived, the mother died.

The funeral had been in the morning and toward nightfall a steady, dreary rain set in.

The husband had wandered down to his office in the afternoon from sheer force of habit, and sat there idly turning over a bundle of letters on whose contents he could not concentrate his attention.

After thoughts.

He thought of the fifteen years they had spent together, as man and wife. And it passed through his mind that perhaps he had not been quite the perfect husband that he had always considered himself to be.

"I suppose I've been as good as most," he thought, uncomfortably. "But I wonder if I was good enough for her."

O, well; it was all over now, and he must make the best of things. There were the children to think of; he would go home to them now; they must feel as forlorn as he.

Poor little mites!

As he entered the front door he found himself listening for the cheery call that always greeted his home-coming.

"Bobbie is getting to be such a great strong boy," she had said with tender pride. "He keeps me half my time mending his things."

With tear-blurred eyes and clumsy, unsteady fingers he picked up the stocking—the last sign of her loving ministration.

He wandered forlornly upstairs. Where are the children? he queried.

A child's laugh rang out, and his first feeling was of angry protest that anyone could laugh.

Then, "They are young and will soon forget," he thought miserably. "And I must bear this loneliness by myself."

He turned into her room—the room he and she shared for fifteen years. There in the closet hung the pretty pink wrapper she had always worn when she did her hair. With a sobbing sight he hurled his face in its silken folds. The sweet fragrance of her spirit still clung to it.

He paced slowly up and down the room, which henceforth must be his alone.

That worn place in the carpet; he remembered that she had wanted a new carpet last Easter, but he had said they couldn't afford it; and then he had bought a very expensive furlined coat for himself, and she had been delighted that he should be so comfortable.

Dreary silence! That sweet, welcoming voice was hushed forever.

With a sigh he turned into the parlor. It was dark, and he stumbled over a foot-stool on his way to press the electric-light button.

What were the servants thinking of to have the house in darkness at this hour? It had never happened before.

The fire that always blazed cheerily on the open fireplace had been allowed to die out, and his own particular chair had been pulled away from the table by which it always stood.

There had always been a lighted lamp on that table and his favorite evening paper.

He looked about the dreary room with a dull throb of misery. Was it always going to be like this?

This room had always been a perfect nest of cozy comfort. She had known so well how to make a room pretty and comfortable.

On a table at the other side of the fire-place was a basket filled with half-finished mending. There was Bobbie's stocking with the darning egg in it, just as she had showed it to him that night before she had taken ill.

In a sudden fit of unendurable misery he walked over to the window and flung it open. It was raining hard, and with a groan he thought how tonight she was lying out under that rain—all alone, his pretty girl.

He moved blindly back to the bedside. Where were his slippers, he wondered. She always had them all ready for him.

As he kicked off his shoes a thing absurdly pathetic upset him utterly.

There was a hole in the toe of his stocking—such a thing had not happened during his fifteen years of married life. She wouldn't have let it happen. With a hoarse sob of misery he cried: "I cannot bear it. I cannot live without her."

When a few minutes later he answered the summons of his dinner gong he found the children at the table, a subdued, little sad-faced group.

He sat down opposite the empty chair. "Children," he said, "I want to tell you that you have lost the best Mother, and I the best wife, that ever lived. And we did not half appreciate her."

And out in the silence and the rain the little mother slept peacefully.

Appreciation had come too late to disturb her placid rest.—Michigan Christian Advocate.

A MODERN SOLOMON

A very canny person, President Kruger, was once called upon, as King Solomon before him, to pass judgment in a matter of ownership. The case was that of two brothers, who had been left a farm and could not agree as to the division which had to be made. They agreed that, rather than take the matter to the courts, they would let President Kruger decide. President Kruger appears to have hesitated about as little as King Solomon did. He instructed the older brother to make what he considered a fair division, and then he gave first choice to the younger brother. A solution like Solomon's, both masterly and simple.