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The Acton Free Press

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I'M GOING TO BE BIG LIKE FATHER

Father's six feet tall, and I'm only three;
But I'm going to catch him. Now watch me and see.
I'm taller than baby, and he's taller than Spot;
Mother says I too was once a wee tot
Father says I must study and learn all I can—
Improve in my manners if I'd be a nice man;
Must quit teasing baby and quit tying Spot—
He was tied up all day once because I forgot.
If I should tie baby, he'd cry and he'd fret;
He'd make such a racket I could not forget.
Spot barked, but I thought he had scented a rat,
Or maybe was teasing and chasing the cat;
It's wrong to tease baby, and it's wrong to tie Spot,
Then go off and leave him; but, you know, I forgot.
He chases the chickens and teases the cat;
But it's not wrong for him to do things like that.
Spot's a dog. I'm a boy and will soon be a man,
And I want to do better, he can't, but I can.
I'll quit teasing baby and quit tying Spot;
Father says he was naughty and sometimes forgot;
For he was a boy once, but now he's a man;
He growed to be good, and I know that I can.
—M. Helen Neff.

The Waking Up Of Yancy

By Charles Moreau Harger

WHEN the "trouble" crew's big four-horse truck, loaded with poles, wire, tools and a dozen men, lumbered out of town, the last worker to clamber aboard was Yancy. He came running around the corner of a shed as we passed, and swung on the tilting end of a long pole that reached far beyond the bed of the truck.

"Always slow, as usual," growled the boss. "Next time you get here earlier."

"Never missed it yet," called up the slender dark-faced youth in self-defense.

"But you make everybody nervous thinking you will. Hang tight there!" as the load went careening over culverts and through great ruts that marked the road along the creek.

The building of the first long-distance telephone line across the prairies was, a task of magnitude. Ahead of us, went the construction gang, setting the poles and stringing the wires. It was a "hurry job" to reach the big city a hundred miles away, and the work would scarce pass muster in these days of modern line-building. Our crew followed, "trimming up the edges" as the boss expressed it.

Yancy was a drifter. He had been taken on two weeks before, when he just dropped into camp. Quiet, a little bashful, he was by no means popular with the rollicking group that made something of a holiday of the task.

Even the boss was out of patience with him. Not because the boy did not work, for he was willing enough, but because he was so retiring that it was difficult to direct him.

That morning things were particularly awry. A high wind had loosened the freshly set poles for miles. All day we were busy straightening the line and untangling wires.

"Climb that pole," called the boss to Yancy at the first stop. The boy made a running start, then leaped with his spikes set into the soft pine, shinning toward the top like a monkey. He was a wizard, too, in handling the glistening copper strands. But when he returned to earth, he dragged wearily to the truck and waited for orders.

"He is a good worker, but he needs stirring up," suggested the boss. "He has to be ordered every time he moves. What's the matter with him?"

Perhaps the crew took the words too seriously. Anyhow Bud Bransfield, the instigator of most of the mischief, planned a method of carrying out the idea he understood the boss to have.

"Better wake him up, hadn't we?" he suggested that noon as we were resting a little, around the truck. Yancy had wandered away out of sight down a little slough.

Laughingly, the linemen placed a long board across two poles lying on the ground. Nails were driven into it and these attached to wires leading to a small battery carried as a testing outfit. When the stage was set we waited, talking in apparent unconcern about the recent rains and the effect of the storm.

Yancy came slowly up from the draw, as usual acting as if he thought himself unwelcome. But this time he received a hearty greeting.

"Move over there Dick, and give the boy a seat," went on Bud, and Yancy took his place in the centre of the group on the board.

Back of the truck where fellow conspirators were waiting was a quick touching of wires, making a connection with the battery and a sharp shock went into the nails in the seat where the boy sat looking around as if embarrassed at the leader's actions. It was an old trick and harmless; but the men's laugh made Yancy furious.

With one bound he leaped up and ran from the group. The yells of laughter followed him.

"Come on back," called Bud. "It didn't hurt you—we just wanted to put some life in your muscles."

Yancy's face purpled with anger and shame. He went silently to the team that was munching its oats and, throwing an arm around the neck of Brown Betty, hid his face against her soft neck. Nor during the long afternoon did he speak, except to say "Yes, sir," to the orders of the boss.

Up and down the poles, reaching far out on the wires, he quickly and surely did his work, the slender body and thin, nervous face outlined against the cloudless sky that bent over the prairie.

At last we reached the Blue River and pitched camp. There were no tents, we slept in the open. Yancy curled up by himself beside a clump of wild cherry bushes, shunning us as if we were enemies. I went over to his side after the others were asleep. His eyes were open, staring at the stars.

"Don't feel bad about it," I pleaded, ashamed myself, of my own part in the trick.

He did not answer nor turn his eyes from the sky, and I returned to my place under the truck. I think all the crew were sorry for the boy—but apologies are hard to make in a group like that.

Looking across the Blue the next morning, we saw that a big task lay before us. The construction gang had, in its haste to push the line through, taken the easiest way. The poles on either bank were unfitted for holding the weight of a span of wire across the river. So at low water the builders had placed a pole in the center of the stream just below a rickety wagon bridge, and on its cross arm rested the wires. Then came the storm, and what was almost a waterspout up stream and—well, we gazed on it in dismay.

"That center pole will have to be straightened," declared the boss. "In this soft ground we can't hold the lines from the bank above."

"Looks like an ugly job," remarked Bud, standing on the bridge and estimating the task of getting the sagging pole into solid position. "Don't see why they didn't run the wires over the bridge."

"Couldn't—county wouldn't give permission." The new country was unfamiliar with telephones and rather resented our invasion.

"It's some river right now to work in." Bud was right. The gathered rainfall was pouring down the outlet in a tumultuous brownish mass, littered with debris and tipped with foam. A few rods below the bridge it poured over a ten-foot rocky ledge, swirling and tumbling like a mountain freshet.

The center pole in mid-river had been swayed downstream by the force of the water and stood at a rakish angle, threatening to fall headlong into the flood.

In vain we tried to bring it back to position by pulling on the wires from the banks—the strands were too heavy for our little company's efforts. Then we tried reaching the pole from the bridge, but in vain. The boss carefully studied the situation and finally announced: "Bud, you'll have to get out there—it's the only way."

Accustomed to obeying orders, the sturdy youth, not waiting for assistance, hastily prepared to carry out the command.

Shedding his heavy climbing boots and throwing his hat carelessly toward the truck, he clambered down the bank. "Wait!" called the boss, but the river's roar drowned the word.

When he had secured a foothold in the bridge's stonework near the water's surface, he took bearings cautiously and plunged into the roaring flood. We saw his head bob under, then come to the surface. It was a harder struggle than he anticipated. Suddenly his bare arm reached out and caught the pole. Slippery as it was, he clung and climbed up and up toward the tangled wires about his head.

Then came a crash from the south bank. One wire had broken under the strain of his weight and the pole in the river gave a dizzy lurch. Bud dared not climb; he dared not drop into the angry swirl below.

The boss excitedly cried "Stick tight!" and made a wild throw of the rope toward him, but it failed to reach its goal.

Over on the truck sat Yancy—he was keeping his distance from the crew when not at work. He had been forgotten by the group gathered on the bridge, when suddenly like a whirlwind he raced across the planks and pushed his way into the midst of the watchers.

Seizing the rope from the boss' grasp he tied one end to the bridge railing and the other around his waist. Before we understood what he was doing, he slid over the edge and was letting himself down. Reaching the length of the rope, he gave a mighty kick and went swinging into space out of sight under the bridge floor.

Then out he came like a great pendulum; back once more, and yet again, each time higher and farther go he threw his little strength into the task. At last reaching his farthest limit, he grasped the wires at the top of the pole. There was another crash of breaking wood and we saw him cling with one arm to the pole, his other arm hanging limp by his side.

How he managed to loop the rope over the pole-top and hold himself I do not know, but in a moment he was reaching down one booted leg and sinking the spike he wore on his boot for climbing into the yielding pine.

"Get it!" he called. Bud with a supreme effort found the foot a holding place, and slowly lifted himself until at last he too, sustained by the wires, was beside Yancy.

Bud had an arm around the boy who seemed suddenly to have lost his nerve. "Hurry get up!" he yelled to the crew standing bewildered by the rapidity with which it had happened.

With all hands on the rope, we pulled the pole a slant upstream toward the bridge. Then "Bring a ladder!" shouted the boss, and from the truck was rushed the longest we possessed. Over it, for it stretched from the bridge floor to the top of the pole, crept Bud, half carrying, half dragging his slender companion.

Yancy has fainted. One shoulder was dislocated by the jerk of the boy's weight when the wire broke. One hand was cut through the flesh by the wires. Safe on solid ground his eyes opened—but he never whimpered.

"Get him back to town—take one team and the truck—take Bud with you," were my orders and soon we were jogging along northward, Yancy lying on a cot made on the floor bed of the truck of all the coats and blankets in camp. We had wrapped his shoulder the best we could and bound up the bleeding hand.

When we were a few miles on the way, Bud, who sat by him, holding the boy's head, leaned close to the peaked little face.

"You're some brave boy—we're all mighty sorry that we—we—well, you know we were kind o' mean."

A flicker of a smile lighted the boy's wan features. "I had to have some kind of a comeback you know," he murmured.

"Where's your home?" asked Bud after a while.

"Ain't got none—sleep over by the lumber yard in the shed—that will be all right."

Bud looked up at me as I sat in the driver's seat. "Go to my house," he exclaimed. "I can't pay this youngster for what he has done for me—but I guess I'm the one who needed waking up."

SHOCKING

An elderly lady of very prim and severe aspect was seated next a young couple, who were discussing the merits of their motor-cars.

"What color is your body?" asked the young man of the girl at his side, meaning, of course, the body of her motor.

"Oh, mine is pink. What is yours?"

"Mine," replied the man, "is brown with wide yellow stripes."

This was too much for the old lady. Rising from the table she exclaimed:

"When young people come to asking each other the color of their bodies at a dinner-party, it is time I left the room."—Tit-Bits.

DEPEND UPON YOURSELF

Independence is a habit rather than an inheritance. Whatever you do for yourself strengthens you, but if you let yourself be carried everywhere you soon lose your ability to walk. Trust to your own hands and feet and brains, if you want to make them trustworthy.

ARE YOU READY?

Your country is asking your aid; are you ready to give it? Not ready to give it next year, next month, but now, to-day? Have you answered to yourself the question of your loyalty to your Government? What does loyalty mean to you? Does it mean doing what the Government requires at your hand or does it go farther and impel you to do what may only be suggested or asked of you?

What is your attitude? Are you giving grudgingly or are you watching eagerly for opportunities to help? When you meet a suggestion as to some method of economizing do you leave it as appropriate for some one else or, if it appears feasible, do you accept it as something you can use? When learning that the supply of gasoline is limited do you begin to think of how many trips you can save in your car? Are you keeping eyes and ears open for ways and means of conserving anything and everything that may be needed for others? Are you willing to wear your coat another season that you may give the cost of a new one to Red Cross work? Are you willing to go without luxuries that the money thus saved may provide food for some one that is hungry? Are you using you mind intelligently in your economies, saving where it is a real saving, doing without the things that will be of service to others? Are you considering earnestly the work you are doing, is it a work that needs doing or could you better employ your time and talents in something of greater benefit to others? Are you crocheting lace when you might be knitting socks? Are you knitting socks when you might be caring for sick soldiers? In short, are you ready to do the thing at hand, the thing that belongs to you to do, your task, faithfully and well, ready to respond heartily and promptly to whatever may be asked of you?

The strength of our country depends upon its loyal citizens. We shall win the war through the efforts and sacrifices of those who are loyal. Does that include you?

Are you ready?

TAKE YOUR PLEASURE NOW

Half the joy of life comes from getting the good out of things as we go along. Some of us are always putting off our enjoyments. After awhile we expect to take a rest, see a friend, or read a book. But after a while never comes. The good time we are looking forward to lies as far ahead as ever. All life is spent in meaning to overtake it and enjoy it. Meanwhile we toil, drudge and grow old, passing by with unseeing eye the happiness we might get out of every day.

Yes, every sordid, commonplace day has its wealth of enjoyment for us, if we only take the trouble to get it out. There are the friends we love, and who love us. If we stopped to think of it, this consciousness would gladden life.

There is the beauty of the earth. Did we only open our eyes to see it, we should be made glad in spite of ourselves. There are people who have lived on earth thirty or forty years who could scarcely tell you the color of the sky from their own observation. They take it for granted it is blue, because they hear so!

There are dozens of simple pleasures we might enjoy. Ten minutes every day with a fascinating book; an inexpensive little jaunt with our family or a congenial friend; fifteen minutes of bright intelligent conversation with the home folks on some other subject than the sordid details of making ends meet; a few minutes in an art gallery, just to look at one good picture—these are some of the little everyday happiness we might take, and do not, not because we are too poor, but because we haven't thought them worth while. We are too busy aiming at some big, expensive pleasure in the future.

Make up your mind, then, that the big pleasures will always elude you. We shall never enjoy life until we learn to enjoy the little happinesses of every commonplace day as we go along.—Philadelphia Bulletin.

ONE-TALENT PEOPLE

There are a few instances in which possessors of varied talents have used them all, and achieved success in several. But as a general thing the one-talent man is to be congratulated. In these days of fierce competition, it is unwise to divide your time and energy among several interests. It would be hard to be a successful business man and a successful artist, at the same time. A physician may find music a pleasant distraction from his professional duties, but he cannot pursue it seriously and keep up his practice.

It is a matter of frequent conjecture what becomes of the youths who lead their college classes, and why it is that the more mediocre students are the ones to be heard from later. There is no universal explanation of this puzzle, but perhaps the following explains the majority of cases. The brilliant youth finds it hard to choose from among his talents. He is continually being turned aside by the insistence of one and another of his gifts. And his more ordinary classmate, who has just one talent, follows that unswervingly, and comes out ahead in the end. Instead of looking with envious eyes on your talented friend, who can do anything he turns his attention to, congratulate yourself that you will not be distracted by half a score of talents clamoring to be utilized, that you can put all your energy into making the most of one.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, July 14, 1898

The wheat harvest has begun.

There was a slight frost here on Sunday night, but the crops are too far advanced to suffer injury.

The ladies Aid of Knox Church held a very enjoyable lawn social at the home of Mr. Charles Davidson last Thursday evening. The programme was given by Acton Cornet Band, Arthurs' String Band, Piper Douglas, an address by D. Henderson, M. P., and numbers by Miss Levinsky, of Toronto, Miss Jennie Smith, Mrs. Macpherson, Miss Watkins and Miss Lillie Halstead.

Two more splendid barns were raised during the week, one on Friday, on the farm of Mr. Andrew Scott, fourth line, and one on Monday on the Clover Hill Dairy Farm, the property of Mr. Martin Flynn.

The Public Library is evidently filling a long felt want. It is being well patronized.

There were 4,000 visitors at the Orangemen's celebration on Tuesday. Mr. Robert Mills, who is 84 years of age, walked with the Acton Orangemen to the station as they went to take the train for Georgetown.

DIED

CAMERON—At the family home, near Acton, on July 8, Maggie Van Vlack, wife of Thomas Cameron.

HOW OLD ARE YOU?

Of the many proverbs on the topic of age, none is so common as the one about a man being "as old as he feels." The truth of this saying is illustrated almost daily in our talk about our acquaintances. We all know people, who when asked how old some one else may be, will reply, "Why, I've no idea how old he is. I've never thought of it, but I suppose he may be somewhere between thirty and forty." If the conversation goes any farther regarding the person in question, it will frequently end with the comment, "Well, whatever his age may be, he certainly looks and acts young."

Does this necessarily mean that some persons look much younger for their years than do others? That we all know to be true; yet there is a much more significant cause for this failure to have opinions upon the ages of our friends.

When a person is enthusiastic over his work, we think of his enthusiasm and nothing else. If he is tremendously in earnest, nothing but his earnestness comes to our mind whenever we hear his name. If he is a humorist, we think at once of his funny sayings. In short, if a friend has any strong characteristic, we remember him by that outstanding quality.

This is quite as it should be. Personality is life's dearest possession. It obliterates every other element in individual character, and without a doubt is responsible for our general habit of ignoring such incidental things as age or personal appearance in our recollection of our friends.

Ralph Waldo Emerson expressed the whole matter in one sentence: "We do not count a man's years until he has nothing else to count." Let us be proud if men remember us in deeds, not in years; then we may know that we are doing something in this world so earnestly and so well that nothing else, in the eyes of others regarding us, is quite so important as that.

"BURN YOUR OWN SMOKE"

James Russell Lowell reminds us that the first lesson of life is to "burn our own smoke." We must not, he tells us, burden outsiders with our petty trials, but must endure silently the hard things common to all human life. If sympathy comes, it will then be all the more grateful because it will come unsought and genuinely from the heart.

"Don't send your son to a private tutor," warned an old schoolmaster whose best friend was seeking advice on the education of his fourteen-year-old boy. "Send him to a school where his classmates will help educate him."

"What do you mean?" queried the other man.

"I mean that other boys will teach him how to stand hard knocks without giving up. It's something no teacher can do for him and unless he learns it at school, he may expect a harder time in years to come."

This is merely one illustration of Lowell's saying: "Burn your own smoke." Learning to burn your own smoke is nothing more than learning how to fill cheerfully your own place among your fellows. It is the practical business of everyday living. All of us can remember meeting people whose desire for sympathy leads them to tell all the insignificant trials and discomforts and to describe in detail all their slight illnesses. We have all listened to such accounts until we were ready to exclaim, at least inwardly, "What a pity you never learned to burn your own smoke!" This practice is no doubt only a habit, but it is one from which we may all hope devoutly to keep free. And the best prescription is to learn early in life thoughtfulness of other people.—Ruth Davis Stevens.

A SERIOUS TASK

Don had finished his first day at school and was on his father's knee for their usual evening talk before being sent to bed. "Well, how do you think you will like school?" his father inquired. The little fellow became serious. "I'm afraid, daddy, I've started something that I can't finish," he replied.—Exchange.

HEAVEN IS NOT REACHED AT A SINGLE BOUND

Heaven is not reached at a single bound,
But we build the ladder by which we rise
From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
And we mount to its summit round by round.

I count this thing to be grandly true:
That a noble deed is a step toward God—
Lifting the soul from the common clod
To a purer air and a broader view.
—J. G. Holland.

TROUBLE SAVERS

A girl who had just finished a composition submitted it to her older sister to read. And presently the senior said with a slight contraction of her eyebrows, "I'm not sure how you've spelled 'receive.' You've written it so very queerly."

The younger girl explained obligingly. "Well, I never can remember whether the e or the i comes first. So I wrote them just alike and put the dot between them."

In the room where the girl sat writing, a dictionary stood upon the bookshelf, a rather small dictionary, it is true, but quite large enough to acquaint the enquirer with the proper way of spelling receive. But the youthful essayist had found it too much trouble to walk to the shelf and consult the authority. She preferred to leave the reader of the essay to supply the right spelling. That was easier.

It is surprising how many workers are always looking for the easier way. One girl in dusting the parlor takes all the ornaments off the mantel, and dusts first the mantel and then each object as she replaces it. And another dusts around the ornaments, so, that if the statuette is lifted, or the match holder pushed to one side, a dusty area is revealed. There are a great many servants who never sweep in corners nor under beds, unless especially requested to do so, and then, as a rule, they act injured.

Among workers of a higher grade the same weakness is noticed. They are trying for the easy way, not the best way. It is often easier to say "I don't know," than to secure the desired information. It is easier to say "I can't," than to fit one's self to do exacting work. It is easier to be superficial than thorough, to shirk than discharge every task faithfully. And thousands do not look any further.

The men whose names are synonymous with successful enterprise are not those who have been interested to find the easy way. They have not been afraid to take pains. They have been ready to work hard, to take time to be sure. Life has been easy for them, but it has been splendid, triumphant.

It is perfectly possible to have an easy time if you want it, to shirk and evade and smooth over. But remember, if this is your choice you rule yourself forever out of the ranks of victors. In saving yourself trouble, you are likely to lose all that makes life worth living.—Alvin N. Brooks.

SUBSTITUTES FOR WHEAT FLOUR

Every Home in Canada Must use Other Cereals with Wheat

That Canada is at war will be brought home to every man, woman and child now when all bread made from standard wheat flour must be labelled "Victory Bread" and mixed with a percentage of substitutes for wheat flour. This is the effect of a recent order issued by the Canada Food Board in a vigorous effort to save the existing wheat supplies so as to make them last out until the wheat of the coming harvest reaches the flour mills and the new flour is distributed for consumption.

The new order defines substitutes for wheat as corn, oats, barley, rice, rye, buckwheat, tapioca and any mixture of same; potato flour, bran, shorts, oatmeal, corn starch, hominy, corn grits, rice meal and potato meal.

Commencing July 1 one pound of wheat substitute must be used by all bakers, confectioners and public eating-places with every nine pounds of standard wheat flour in making any bakers' products, and the same rule shall apply to every person in Canada who makes bread, rolls or pastry for private consumption. On and after July 15 in all Canada east of Port Arthur the proportion is to be increased to one pound substitute with every four. In Port Arthur and the West this increase is still in abeyance, proceeding the report on the quantities of substitutes available.

REPUTATION AND RECORD

Too many people are more concerned to keep their reputation good than their record clean. Few are so foolish as not to care what others think about them. One must be reckless indeed, not to realize that reputation is capital which it is madness to squander. But thousands have an idea that the wrong-doing which can be successfully concealed is no great harm. Many a youth who leads an exemplary life in his country home, where every act will be known and commented on, casts discretion to the winds when he goes to the great city, where he may tramp about all day and not see a face he has ever seen before. He can do as he pleases, he tells himself. His reputation is safe.

Such people fail to distinguish the substance from the shadow. A good reputation is only the shadow of an admirable character. Its worth is not in itself, but in what it represents. To have others think well of you, if they are mistaken, is nothing especially desirable. Why set your heart on possessing counterfeit coin, even if you can pass it off on the unsuspecting? Keep your record clean and let your reputation take care of itself.

NOBLE SAYINGS

In a free country there is much clamour with little suffering; in a despotic state, there is little complaint, but much suffering.—Carnot.

O Star of human faith and hope!
Thy light shall lead us on,
Until it fades in morning's glow,
And heaven on earth is won.
—Frederick L. Hosmer.

What right, what true, what fit we justly call,
Let this all be my care—for this is all.
—Pope

When I wish to ascertain the real felicity of any rational man, I always inquire whom he has to love.—Mrs. Inchbald.

A country had better be physically devasted than morally ruined.—Beale.

Sweet are the thoughts that savour of content;
The quiet mind is richer than a crown.
—Robert Greene.