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The Acton Free Press

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BEFORE SUNSHINE

A world of half tints, faintly, sweetly flushed,
A world on tiptoe, eager, hushed;
A dew-fresh waiting world, which lingers, fire
Upon the shadows of Day's great golden sea

Poised like the straight, young body of a boy
Ivory and rose, who laughs in careless joy
Above the river's brink, and breathing deep,
Flings wide his arms before the final leap.

A world of song; of feathered throats a flute,
With every tree a swaying emerald lute,
While in the green glades, heralding the Morn,
I hear the little Minstrel Wind of Dawn.

In The Highest Court of Appeal

By Dennis H. Stovell

"I'VE GOT IT, JOSIE! I've got it!" Luse Wicks shouted triumphantly as he pulled his horse to a quick halt at the gate and waved a long envelope over his head. He swung out of the saddle and tossed the reins over a picket. His horse was panting, and its flanks were foam-flecked, showing the effects of a hard run.

"Yes, I've got it! I knew I would win! The stump lot belongs to me! The court has issued a decree in my favor!" In the voice of Luse Wicks was the tone of wild triumph. Again he waved the long envelope over his head, and hurried up the walk to meet his sister.

Somehow, Josie did not join with him in his joyful elation. His excited, almost mad exultance frightened her. He rushed up and jerked a legal-looking document from the long envelope, holding it with trembling hands before her face.

"Look at that, Jo! Look at that!" he fairly screamed. "That stump lot is mine! It's mine!" The court says so!"

It was a formidable-appearing thing—that big sheet of paper, with its border lines of purple, its conspicuous letters of black, its strange phrases and its scrawled signatures at the bottom. An expression of fear came into her eyes as she gazed at it. She could get nothing from it—nothing that could make her share the mad exultance of her brother.

Luse began reading aloud, as if to make her better understand: "In the Probate Court for the County of Jefferson: In the matter of the estate of Adam Wicks. To all persons to whom these Presents shall come, Greeting: Know ye, that in the Court aforesaid, that Adam Wicks left certain undivided and undisposed-of properties, and among them being a certain parcel of land—"

Luse paused to catch his breath. Before reading more he looked into his sister's face and saw the expression of dumb wonderment.

"Don't you understand, Jo?" he asked, as if annoyed by her lack of comprehension. "This is the decree from the Probate Court," he explained. "It gives me right and title to the old stump lot. It's mine! This is the description." The he began to read again: "Being a part of the west half of the east section, in township twenty—"

"Yes, Luce—I know! I know!" Josie interrupted, as she raised her hand. "I know what it is. But I think—"

"But you think I'm not entitled to it?" Luse spoke sharply, as he lowered the paper and glared at her. "Of course I'm entitled to it. The matter is settled now—for all time. The Probate Court, with the agreement of the administrator has given it to me."

"Please don't be angry with me, Luse," Josie begged kindly, laying her hand on his shoulder and looking up into his bronzed face. There was a tender appeal in her glowing blue eyes—an appeal that quickly touched the heart of her brother.

His tone softened quickly. "Of course I will not be angry with you, Jo," he assured. "I realize you feel about it. You've always believed there might be some mistake. But I thought this would settle the matter with you. I'm sorry you can't see things as I do. I'm so happy about it myself that I thought you would be, too."

He folded the document and went on in the house to his mother, to make the same glad report he had brought his sister. He left Josie standing on the gravel walk, feeling more miserable than before. The girl had hoped all along that this unfortunate dispute over the old stump lot would be settled in some other way. Over two years before her Uncle Adam Wicks, a bachelor, who lived on a claim near by, had passed away. He left no will. None at least that anybody could find. In the distribution of his property, by the administrator, there rose a disagreement as to the disposal of the half-cleared, stump-strewn parcel of land that lay between the Wicks farm and the place of Luman Kyle. Ezra Kyle was the son of Luman, and a cousin of Luse. Both boys had shared the affections and the confidences of their uncle Adam. And both laid a claim upon the old stump lot.

This disagreement, as to who owned, or who should own, the old stump lot, brought up entrangement between the two families. For over two years now the briar-grown strip had remained a sort of dead-line between the two farms. When Josie went down to the gate and looked out over it as she had done many, many times, she felt as if she were looking out over a battlefield. The black, silent forms of the stumps lifted above the tall fern and the green blackberry vines grim sentinels doing guard duty. Over this battle field waged the war of misunderstanding, of bitterness and of enmity between two families. She could not believe that this decree from the court, even though it gave "right and title" to the land to her brother, would settle the difficulty. It would not bring peace.

Josie could not understand why so much ill feeling should arise over a strip of land. The land, unused, and much of it unclaimed, lay spread in countless acres around the two farms. The green hills reared their lilac slopes—held their great sides aloft, as if to give space and freedom to those who wanted it. Yet here was the stump lot, with its grim black sentinels, proving a veritable Armageddon in a land where peace should reign.

Her brother came from the house, walking swiftly, and whistling happily. He paused to lay his hand on her shoulder. "Cheer up, Jo!" he spoke heartily. "Don't be so glum! It's all settled now! The land is ours and we can be happy!" He went on through the gate and led his horse to the barn.

Josie wished she could feel as confident and as sure as did her brother, and she would have told him it was not the land she wanted. The thing she most desired was the good will, the friendship and the love of those who lived on the other side of the stump lot, with its grim, black sentinels.

That afternoon Luse made a trip to town with the buckboard. He brought back a box which he was careful to place on a bed of straw near the middle of the rig. When a quarter of a mile from the house he brought the team to a stop and lifted the box carefully. Very carefully he set it over the rail fence and carried it out into the middle of the stump lot, depositing it in the sheltering hollow of a burned-out pine.

Josie had been watching him from the gate, and her curiosity was aroused.

"It's dynamite, Jo," he told her. "I'm going to blast out those stumps. It will be much quicker than using a puller. Anyhow, the ground is getting dry, and if I clear it in time, I can yet plow it and now a field of corn for silage. That land is rich, and—"

He ceased speaking and looked at his sister. He noted the expression of fear that had come into her eyes. He knew its meaning. "It will be all right, Jo, you little timid titkouse," he hastened to assure. "It won't be dangerous—and I shall be careful. I took a lesson in blasting before I bought the explosive. So I know just how to handle it."

The sister offered no spoken protest, in truth, she could not say a word. She was almost glad, in a vague way, that those grim, black sentinels would be removed. And she hoped, with all her heart, their passing would bring peace upon the battle field.

Early the next morning, after again assuring his sister and mother he would use all due precaution, Luse went out to the stump lot. He whistled as he went, for he carried with him the triumphant feeling of a conqueror. It was good to know that after all the struggle, all the trouble, he had been declared victor—and the land was his!

Just to prove his ownership, and to begin a manifestation of his rights where they could be plainly seen, he began work on the farther border of the strip but a few rods from the fence of his Uncle Luman Kyle. With a long-bitted augur he bored a deep hole at the base of a stump, then placed a dynamite stick, setting the cap and fuse. Before touching it off, he raised up and looked around.

Down in the gulch, a full half-mile away, was the home of his Uncle Luman. Some one was plowing in a field this side of the house. Nearer by, in the fern-grown meadow beyond the line fence, but a safe distance away, was a flock of sheep.

Luse took a match from his pocket, struck it on his boot, and lighted the fuse. The powdered thread had no sooner begun to sputter, than the youth was on his feet and running swiftly. He dived down into the shelter of a convenient ravine. Soon followed the boom of the blast, in a loud, detonating report that woke a hundred sleeping echoes, hurling them back and forth from hill slope to hill slope. A dense cloud of dirt and debris and splintered wood rose skyward, then rained its broken portions over the stump lot.

Running out from his place of shelter, Luse found only a hole in the ground where the black stump had been. Elated with his success he went to work on another, boring a deep hole and setting the fuse. Feeling confident that the first loud report would give due warning to all surrounding creatures, the youth took only a brief glimpse around before striking a match.

Great was his surprise when he started to run to discover the flock of sheep only a little way beyond the line fence. The rank fern had hidden them from view when he looked up before. Hearing the blast they had come over to investigate. Ahead of the main flock trotted a mother ewe. The old sheep bleated anxiously, for her baby lamb, all unaware of danger, had scampered on through the fence into the wood lot.

The presence of the lamb within the danger zone would itself have filled the youth with consternation. But a second glance brought him to a halt, overwhelming him with terror; Ezra Kyle had emerged from the tall fern and was climbing the fence!

For a few seconds, though it seemed far longer, Luse stood trembling, unable to speak or move. Ezra got over the fence and came on. The youth realized it was the lamb, the helpless baby sheep, that brought his cousin into the stump lot. If Ezra was aware of his peril, he gave no evidence of it. He walked on, unhesitatingly, toward the frisking little creature, getting every moment closer to the impending blast.

Luse finally aroused himself, and shouted shrilly: "Look out! Look out! There's going too be an explosion! Run back, quick!"

Ezra scarcely hesitated. He looked up and spoke calmly: "I must get the little sheep."

The genuine sympathy, the real courage, the strong tone of purpose in Ezra's voice touched a responsive chord in the heart of Luse. A host of memories, that indifference and enmity had all but smothered, now rose before him. And he remembered how Ezra had always been that way—ever ready to help and serve. His own risk and danger were things unconsidered. So it was the time he ran into a burning shed to save the life of a puppy—a puppy that Luse owned and prized. And so it was now, when he would save the life of the baby sheep!

All the bitterness, all the misunderstanding seemed to be swept at once from the heart of Luse Wicks. Anyhow, he concluded as a big and noble purpose came into his mind, he should do as much for the helpless creature as Ezra was willing to do. "I'll get the lamb!" he called. "Turn back! Get out of the way, quick!"

He dashed forward, swift as his feet would carry him, and stooping, picked up the baby sheep with one sweep of his long arms. He realized now, that without loss of several precious seconds, there was not time enough to gain the shelter of the ravine. He ran straight for the fence, calling to Ezra: "Come back! Follow me!"

Over the line fence the two of them leaped. The flock of sheep, wildly startled, turned about and rushed into the tall fern. Luse, with the warm soft body of the lamb pressed close against his breast, reached a dense clump of hazel. Into this he dived, with Ezra close at his heels.

Immediately came the detonating report of the blast. Instinctively, the two youths dropped low. Luse held himself protectingly over the baby sheep. Soon, splintered pine began falling around them. Bits of earth and rock rained upon the hazel clump.

Then came silence. With a long breath of relief, Luse raised up, but dodged back again when a lardy missile, as if hurled to a greater height, crashed down through the overhanging growth. It struck the ground between the two youths.

The unexpected coming of the lateffailing thing startled both of them. But its loud clatter, on striking the earth, caused them to wonder. Luse saw quickly that it was neither a stone nor a chunk of wood. He stood a long while, looking at it in abject wonderment. While he looked, the mother ewe pushed her way timidly into the growth, bleating lowly. Luse released to her the wriggling baby sheep. Then he stooped lower and picked up a broken, rusty metal box. He turned it over, and out of the burst top dropped a bundle of faded papers, a bunch of keys and an old autograph album.

With wide-open, staring eyes, Luse read the name on the cover of the album: "Adam Wicks." And in the same bold writing, done carefully with a pen, was the legend on the sheet of the paper bundle: "Last Will and Testament."

"This was Uncle Ad's box!" Luse spoke in low, tense tones. "He must have placed it in the hollow of the stump for safe keeping!"

With trembling fingers he unfolded the faded sheet. His eyes passed rapidly over the many lines to the signature at the bottom. Close over the signature was a postscript, and the words of this, because of their peculiar meaning, at once caught and held the youth's attention. For a full half-minute he read while Ezra waited in silence. As he read there came upon him the truth that the stump lot, after all—after all the bitterness and misunderstanding, after all the enmity, yes, and in spite of the decree of the court, did not belong to him! His uncle, and Ezra's uncle, had will it to both of them.

"Here, Ezra," spoke Luse, with infinite kindness, as he handed the faded sheet to his cousin, "read this. It is the will of Uncle Ad. I have been wrong. The Probate Court was wrong. This is the Court of Highest Appeal—the decision of one who loved us both! I beg you to forgive me!"

In the shelter of the hazel clump, with the leaves whispering softly close over them, with the mother sheep and the baby lamb to bear mute witness, the two cousins clasped hands in a new compact of friendship and devotion.

In the days that followed, the two boys, working happily together, cleared the stump lot. In course of time tall stalks of corn rose over the field, replacing the grim, black sentinels, waving their white tassels like flags of truce.

BACK OF WHAT YOU SAY

What you say takes its value from what you are. Words in themselves are "trifles light as air." It is your personality that makes them weighty. Be somebody if you wish your words to carry conviction. Manliness and sincerity and strength will make your simple "yes" and "no" worth more than a long discourse which has no such backing.

SCIENCE CAN AID INDUSTRY

In several British industries, native raw materials are now being utilized where, before the war such materials were imported from the continent simply because the manufacturer did not happen to know that ample supplies of the same were at his very door, a fact of which he would have been informed had he consulted competent scientific authorities. This is well illustrated in the case of one of the largest steel corporations of England which, until 1914, had been importing from Austria, through a German firm, a certain material for lining its converters. When war was declared it congratulated itself on the fact that it had a two years' supply on hand. As time wore on, however, and the supply diminished, complacency gave place to anxiety. Finally, the directors decided to call on scientific advice. They were referred to the geologists who informed them that a bountiful supply of the material in question was available in the immediate vicinity of their own plant. The information was acted upon, a shaft was sunk at no great distance from their furnaces, and, as a result, the company is now mining in sufficient quantity on its own account the material formerly imported from Austria at many times the present cost.—Prof. J. C. Fields.

A LESSON IN PROMISE KEEPING

The difference between men is often largely a matter of their keeping their word. When Dwight Moody was a small boy and attending school he made an agreement to work for a neighbor for his board. After he had sat down to communal lunch for nineteen meals in succession, he became tired of his bargain, and asked his mother if she did not think it would be right for him to leave.

Mrs. Moody questioned him as to the exact wording of his verbal contract with the neighbor. Dwight was obliged to acknowledge that there had been no stipulation as to the kind of board. He had agreed to work for his board and that was all. In response to further inquiries he owned that he got enough such as it was. And then his mother decided that there was no way out, that he must abide by his promise and eat his much without any grumbling. While one cannot fail to sympathize with the growing boy's dissatisfaction over his monotonous fare, who can doubt that the training which taught him to govern his plighted word so highly had much to do with making the man whose nobility of character is recognized and honored the world over.

HIS GENEROSITY

A "Tommy" laying in hospital, had beside him a watch of curious and foreign design. The attending doctor was interested.

"Where did your watch come from?" he asked.

"A German give it me," he answered.

A little piqued, the doctor inquired how the foe had come to convey this token of esteem and affection.

"I 'ad to," was the laconic reply.

TWENTY YEARS AGO

From the Issue of the Free Press of Thursday, August 11th, 1898

Country schools re-open next Monday.

The new pavement is very popular with the nurse girls and their baby carriages.

Mr. Geo. Stovel, late of Toronto, has opened a shoemaking and repairing business in the store lately occupied by W. H. Adams, tailor.

Arrangements are being completed whereby Dr. McDonald will take over the practice of Dr. J. F. Uren, who is removing to Toronto. Much regret is felt at Dr. Uren's removal. During his eight years residence here he has proven himself a skilful physician and won a very large practice.

Mr. J. C. Matthews returned home on Friday from a two-week's wheeling trip, making Prescott, Kingston and Ottawa principal objective points. He reports a very enjoyable outing.

A serious fire occurred in the building occupied by the Milton Champion and Harry's saddlery, Milton, on Friday night. The building was completely gutted at the back, and Mr. Harry's family, who lived upstairs at the front of the building, had to be let down from the upstairs windows as the stairs were burned.

Complaints have been made by farmers along the Silver Creek that the Georgetown waterworks takes so much water that there is none left for their farms. The ruins this week have given temporary relief.

BORN

McLAUGHLIN—At lot 27, con. 6, Nassagaweya, on Friday, August 4, to Mr. and Mrs. Nelson McLaughlin, a son.

THE WAINWRIGHT BUFFALO FARM OF CANADA

The Canadian government engages in farming on a large scale, in a score of experimental farms, but is has another farm devoted to the growing of buffalo, with the laudable purpose of saving the noble animal from threatened extinction.

If you go to the Province of Alberta, in the Canadian West, on the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway, you will pass the station of Wainwright, and you will be almost sure to see a herd of the big shaggy buffalo browsing or making their way across the prairie.

In a huge enclosure, surrounded by a wire fence, fifteen feet high, over two thousand bison are found, having increased in a comparatively few years from the original herd of less than five hundred. Thus the effort to increase their numbers, under strict game laws, is meeting with success.

The story of how the Wainwright buffalo farm was started is an interesting one. A rancher, by the name of Pablo, living in Montana, owned several hundred buffalo, practically the last large herd in America outside of a few in Government parks of the United States and Canada. Pablo offered to sell his animals to either the United States or Canadian Governments. The latter made the purchase. Then the exciting part began when they started to corral the big animals and to load them in stock cars for their railway journey to their new home in Canada.

It took weeks to accomplish the task, at great risk to the cowboys employed, and even then some of the buffaloes succeeded in escaping, and presumably are still roaming the Montana hills in freedom. But the majority were transported and delivered to their new owners, where, under favorable living conditions, they are, as has been said, thriving and increasing.

THE DIGNITY OF HOME WORK

One of the criticisms of the present industrial scheme is its monotony. Formerly a cobbler made a shoe throughout, but in the modern shoe factory, one man's part in the process is so small that he is hardly obliged to use his brains, but mechanically repeats the same process over and over. "It isn't the hours I mind," said a girl factory worker. "It's always doing the same thing. When I think how many labels I've pasted on in a day, I want to scream."

Sometimes people speak pityingly of the girl who is obliged to do work in the home, but never was pity more misapplied. To begin with, home work is healthful exercise, developing nearly all the muscles. Though a girl may be on her feet many hours a day, it is not like the monotonous standing behind a counter. The girl who does home work moves from room to room, stoops, straightens, bends this way and that, and keeps herself supple and rested by change of movement. Moreover, home work is interesting. It calls for intelligence. There is a new problem every time one makes a loaf of bread or launders a shirt waist. It would be difficult to name an employment which women take part in any any numbers, which is so advantageous to both body and mind.

HIS FIRST PERFORMANCE

"Who's dead?" asked the stranger, viewing the elaborate funeral procession.

"The bloke that's inside the coffin," answered an irreverent small boy.

"But who is it?" the stranger panted.

"It's the mayor," was the reply.

"So the mayor is dead, is he?" mused the stranger.

"Well, I guess," said the small boy, witheringly. "D'you think he's having a rehearsal?"—Milestones.

TWO GIRLS OF BINBURY TOWN

Two sisters live in Binbury town,
As I will tell to you,
Miss Dorothy Rose, with eyes of brown
And Alice, with eyes of blue.
These girls are as pretty as girls can be;
They are always trim and neat,
And they are a charming pair to see
When they go down the street.

Now all of the folks out Binbury way
Know Alice and Dorothy well.
"The Red Cross girls are coming," they say,
And this is the tale they tell:
Miss Dorothy Rose, whose eyes are brown,
And Alice, with eyes of blue,
Have set an example to all the town
Of something fine to do.

They spend no more in a foolish way;
They save ten cents and dimes;
They eat not half of the sweets to-day
That they ate in former times;
They rarely visit the "movies" show;
They pass the "bargains" by;
For there is a lot to give up, you know,
When people really try.

And all of the money they save that way,
Our Alice and Dorothy Rose,
They reckon carefully day by day
And give to the good Red Cross.
And that's the example they set the town
Of something fine to do—
The sweet little lass with the eyes of brown
And the one with the eyes of blue.

MOMENTUM AND SUCCESS

When a stone begins to roll down a mountain side, it is easy to stop it. The touch of a child's hand may be enough to check its downward movement. But after the stone has continued to roll for a few minutes, it would be dangerous to get in its way. It will crash through an obstacle which in the beginning would have been enough to stop it entirely.

Few people realize the worth of momentum in achievement. Some young men change occupations frequently. Their nature is such that they are inclined to see the advantages of something at a distance, and the disadvantage of what is near at hand. If they have a clerical position, they envy the outdoor work of a farmer, and on the farm they rebel against its drudgery and decide that the life of a travelling man is the thing that would suit them best. Many a man changes from place to place and from one kind of work to another, until when he reaches middle life, he has no momentum to carry him along. He is no better off than when he started.

The work we try to do for others is frequently a failure because we lose momentum. A young man who became interested in a little newsboy, decided to play the big-brother role. For several months he saw the boy often, loaned him books and gave him good advice, and in many ways interested himself in the little fellow's welfare. Then his interest took another turn, and he forgot all about his protege. It is unlikely that his efforts in the newsboy's behalf were productive of any real good, because they were not continuous. He lost momentum by not keeping at it.

The thing we do continually, we do better and more easily than the thing we do now and then. The law of momentum is very largely the law of success.

HATS OFF TO CANADA

Mr. Root showed his customary keen perception of the historic significance of events when, at Toronto recently, he said: "We bow to this warrior country. Our own half million of soldiers in France certainly must stand at their proudest salute when the half million of Canadians who preceded them there pass by." The response of Canada to the call of this war was not merely the response of obedience to the British empire. It was a brave, an instant, a most spirited answer to the call of civilization, liberty and that enduring peace of the world which can be based only on the triumph of right over wrong. Canada did not falter, nor bargain, nor question. She responded with her noblest manhood, and the blows which she has struck against a power which has proved to be our enemy quite as much as hers have had their full force in holding back the German invader from the free lands. On Vimy Ridge, that advanced point to which Canadians carried the standard, they still stand like a rock. If the United States had answered the great call with the same promptness and with the proportion of its man power with which Canada responded, the German armies would have been hurled back beyond the Rhine long ago. Yes—we take off our hats to Canada.—From the Boston Transcript.

LETTING WELL ENOUGH ALONE

One of the most dangerous bits of counsel ever coined is the familiar advice to let well enough alone. Because of trusting to this counsel, thousands of people have never realized their possibilities. They are living mediocre lives, ignoring their opportunities for better things, and silencing the voices within their breast which whisper of noble living and heroic sacrifice. "Let well enough alone," croaks the voice of self-designated common sense. "Let well enough alone. Be satisfied so long as you are comfortable. Do not bother about great causes. Do not trouble yourself about the world's unfortunates. You have all that you need and that should satisfy you. If once you begin trying to improve yourself, and trying to help others, no one knows where it will end. Let well enough alone."

There is just one answer to reasoning of this sort. Nothing is well enough which is not as good as we can make it. After we have done our very best, made the most of every opportunity, faced every sacrifice unflinchingly and put our whole soul into our effort, it is useless to fret and worry over the result. It is well enough, since it is the best that we can do. Leave it alone.

HARRY LAUDER ON DRINK

In a recent article published by "Association Men," Harry Lauder, the comedian, gave this personal testimony. "No man can be successful and drink. It does not matter who he is—soldier or civilian. When I started on the stage somebody said, 'Well, it is a great life for disappointed and drinking.' 'Well,' I said, 'if there is any success to be had through being sober and steady, I will get it,' and I took a vow that I would not touch, taste or handle strong drink of any description until I had made a name for myself. Now that I have made my name known all over the world, I see more beggarly for doing that thing that is right than ever before, in order to hold that reputation. There is more need now for me to be sober and steady, for I am looked upon as an example."