

The Free Press Short Story

TREMENDOUS TRIFLES

By ALBERT W. TOLMAN

MES SEWELL, telephone girl for the Knickerbocker Building Company, paused in the swinging gate of the rental department, starting from one to the other of the young rental men. The manager of the department had been employed by another big New York building the week previous, and Mr. Ludlow, the Knickerbocker's general manager, had failed to designate whether Harold Kelton or Dana McGrath was to fill the vacancy.

Seniority of age and employment decided Miss Sewell after a moment's hesitation. She walked up to the front desk back of which sat a fair young man with slicked-back blond hair and light blue eyes. She handed the oldest rental man in the department a calling card. "This gentleman dropped in while you were both out showing space, Mr. Kelton," explained Miss Sewell. "I believe he wanted to rent an office. He's at the Roosevelt, but he said he was leaving for Boston on the afternoon train."

Harold Kelton smiled. "Thank you, Miss Sewell. Will you try to get him on the phone?"

A moment later the telephone operator had made the connection. Harold Kelton leaned back languidly in his chair. "Kelton, of the Knickerbocker Building Company calling," he said briskly. "Did you wish to see me, Mr. Frederick? Oh, you'll be back in the city next week? Yes; I wish you would drop in. A thousand feet of space? Yes; you can give you a whole floor if you need it. Thank you, Mr. Frederick. I'll be expecting you, then, sometime next week. Good-by."

Harold Kelton hung up the receiver and turned around in his chair to face the brown-haired, brown-eyed young man behind the second desk. Kelton stifled a yawn. "Another of these fellows who are just looking around, I guess. Say, how about running out to lunch and then shooting eighteen holes of golf, Dane?"

Dane McGrath smiled, shaking his head. "I think I'll stick around. You never know when some one may drop in on Saturday afternoon, and an extra tenant is pretty important these days. Don't you think you should go around and call on Mr. Frederick?"

Harold shrugged. "What's the use? He'll be in some time next week, anyway. If he's interested. You can call on him if you like; but I don't think it will do you any good. He said he'd be pretty busy this afternoon."

He tossed the calling card onto Dana's desk, stretched, rose, and scuntered out, his hat tilted jauntily on his tawny-headed head.

Dane looked at the card. It read: C. A. FREDERICK, President Hub-City Textile Mills Boston, Mass.

Dane deliberated. If he went to call on Mr. Frederick, would that gentleman think they were pressing matters too much? Dane decided. He had been kind enough to call, he must have at least some interest in looking at space. Dane could inquire about the Hub-City Textile Mills' needs, and then locate the various vacancies to show Mr. Frederick when he returned to New York.

Dane walked over to the files, removed several cards which related the largest amounts of vacancies on various floors, and wrote down the locations, the cost a foot for space, and the amount of footage available. He slipped the paper into his pocket, picked up his hat, and walked out of the office.

Several blocks from the office, he entered the uptown express, and stepped from the subway at Grand Central Terminal. A short walk through the connecting tunnel and he was in the Roosevelt's lobby. He stepped over to the house telephone and called Mr. Frederick's room. "This is Dana McGrath, of the Knickerbocker Building Company's rental department," Dane explained. "I wonder if you could give me a minute or so of your time."

"Yes," said a hearty voice. "Another rental man is here now; but you might drop in, in fifteen or twenty minutes. I can't give you more than a few minutes because I'm expecting to leave."

Frederick pleasantly. "Another rental man was in here a moment ago, and I've just about decided to take space in his building for our branch office."

Dane laughed. "So Taylor told me! Well, the Brooklyn Building is a good one! But we have a good building, too. I'd like to have you describe just what you have in mind for an office, Mr. Frederick, and let me figure on space for you so, that I can give you the information on what we can do for you."

Mr. Frederick's heavy white brows knitted. "We have one of the largest textile mills in New England," declared the man. "We've always worked on the theory that if you make a good enough mouse trap, the world will beat a track to your door. We've sold our textiles in Boston, using only agents in New York. But the mouse-trap idea isn't working so well in these days of cut-throat competition. We know we can produce as good textiles as anyone in the field; but most of the buying is in New York, and it won't do us any good to make the best textiles unless we can acquaint buyers with that fact. We figure we could do a lot better to have a branch factory and showroom down here. Ought to stimulate business."

"That sounds logical," admitted Dane, "How what do you need in the way of office space, work-room space, lighting, and so on?"

Mr. Frederick started to speak when the door of the suite opened. A slim blue-eyed girl with short flaxen locks burst into the room. "Oh," she exclaimed. "Excuse me, Daddy! I didn't know you had a visitor! And I invited the Currens up!"

"That's all right, dear. Pay I'd like you to meet Mr.—Mr. Dana McGrath."

Dane looked into the clear blue eyes of the girl and flushed as he took her extended hand. "I'm awfully sorry if I've interrupted," said Pay. "The Currens are old friends and they're going West to-night. We want to have another chance to see them for some time."

"That's all right," said Dane; although he realized with a sinking feeling inside that he would have little chance to talk business.

Pay excused herself, slipping into her own room.

Dane knew that he had several minutes to talk to Mr. Frederick. He might talk fast and hard to sell the textile man on renting from the Knickerbocker Building. Dane, however, had no patience with "high-pressure salesmanship." Either he had to sell a man on the idea that he was offering something which his buyer really needed or Dane would not rent space. His customers must be satisfied.

Another course Dane might follow would be to remain, hoping that the Currens would leave soon; but he disliked to be an intruder.

He rose, deciding on another plan. "I'll run along now, Mr. Frederick. I know you'll want to talk to these old friends. But I wonder if I could talk to you later?"

Mr. Frederick frowned. "I'm taking the train in an hour."

"Would you mind if I took the same train and talked to you on the way to Boston?"

The textile man hesitated. "I'd be glad to have you talk to me," he said; "but as I told you before, I'm pretty well sold on the Brooklyn Building for our purpose. You can do as you wish, of course."

Dane smiled infectiously. "I'll take the train, then, sir. Like Taylor, I feel we have exactly the requirements you need. You see, Mr. Frederick, our build-

ing is close to the headquarters of a number of textile companies."

"That so? Well, I'll be glad to talk to you, anyhow."

When Dane reached the lobby, he stopped to count the money in his bill fold. His countenance fell. "Say!—I have just enough money to get a ticket on an extra-fare train to Boston, and enough for dinner. I won't have money for a hotel or for return fare or for meals while I'm in Boston!"

"This was a new problem. He had failed to go to his bank because he had enough to carry him through the weekend if he remained in the city, as he had planned to do. Now the banks were closed for it was Saturday afternoon."

Dane called the office, but as he had anticipated, the switchboard was closed for the day. He then called Harold Kelton's golf club, but the other rental man had already gone onto the course. He called the general manager but Mr. Ludlow was not home, and the paid informed Dane that he had gone to the country with some friends.

Dane groaned. He called up three more friends who might be able to make him small loans until Monday. Not one of them was home! Should he give up the opportunity of talking to Mr. Frederick and the chance to rent the space to the Hub-City Textile Mills? Or should he go along to Boston, and trust that he could get some money by wire?

Dane glanced at his watch. Fifteen minutes to catch his train! He decided to go to Boston. He reached the station, bought his ticket, and raced through the gates just as they were closing. To his dismay, he saw that there were two week-end sections.

Dane ran along the platform, asking each conductor if he had seen a short, heavily-built man and a slim, beautiful girl in green. One conductor remembered such a man, but the girl with him wore a blue dress, a blue coat and a blue hat. Was it Pay or some one else? "Which section did they take?" asked Dane breathlessly.

The conductor pointed to the section at the opposite side of the platform. The porter was just closing the door. Dane dashed across the platform, and pushed through the door. Just then the train started to move.

He was on the train; but was it the right one? Dane hurried down the aisle to the front of the Boston train. His heart dropped when he reached the dining car. He did not see the Fredericks. He started back along the aisle, looking more carefully, and his heart leapt when he had reached the last car.

He saw a blond girl in a blue dress, pay Frederick! She smiled at him, and asked him to be seated.

After talking for several moments, she rose. "I know you and Daddy want to talk business, Mr. McGrath," she smiled. "I'll take a vacant seat and read."

Dane immediately drew out the notes he had made at the office, and described some of the floor space they had to offer. He was familiar with the lighting, the view, every feature of every office in his building.

Mr. Frederick offered objections, and Dane explained how the troubles could be met with subdivision of the space by partitions. He was able to compute the exact cost of each floor and each foot of space. Finally, Dane said, "You, of course, know far better than I do exactly what you need, Mr. Frederick. But it seems to me that we can make you very comfortable in the Knickerbocker Building. I'd appreciate it if you'd let me show you some of our offices before you close with the Brooklyn Building."

Mr. Frederick smiled broadly for the first time. "I'm not entirely blind as to what you have to offer, McGrath. Let me make a confession. I went from floor to floor of your building to look for your office. I had just about decided to take space. But when that other fellow called me up, his cocksureness rather irritated me. Then Taylor came in, and he rather sold me on his building, though I felt its location might prove a little awkward. But I was still rather annoyed by Kelton and I told Taylor I thought I might close with him."

when I returned at the end of next week. But I made no promises. I think you've proved pretty conclusively to me that I should take space in the Knickerbocker Building. So if you'll send me a lease when you get back to New York, I'll sign it and write Taylor that I've done so."

Dane felt rather breathless. It was the largest amount of space the Knickerbocker had rented in six months.

"By the way, McGrath, are you returning to New York to-night?"

"No, sir. I think I'll probably have to stay in Boston until Monday."

Mr. Frederick nodded. "Want to see the city, I suppose? Well, if you'd care to stay with us at our place in Cambridge, we'd love to have you. We all go to church in the morning, and Pay might drive you around a bit in the afternoon."

"Thank you, sir. I'd be delighted!"

Sunday morning Dane went to a little vine-covered church in Cambridge with Mr. and Mrs. Frederick and Pay. After dinner at the great Frederick mansion, Pay and Dane drove around the historical portions of Boston and Cambridge. Before long they were chatting like old friends. "I hope you won't forget me when you return to New York," laughed Pay.

Dane looked at her, sitting so straight and trim at the wheel of the blue roadster. Her face was flushed and eager. "It's not likely I'll ever forget you," he said slowly. "If I had a better position, you'd not be safe for a minute." Dane flushed, biting his lip. "Now I'm being forward! Pardon me!"

Rose crept into her cheeks. "I was hoping you might say—" A thinking laugh escaped her. "Now I'm being forward!"

"They both laughed.

"Anyway, you'll be in a better position, soon," she prophesied solemnly.

"How do you know, Pay?"

"Daddy says so. He likes you, too. It's a great judge of men. He liked the way you came up here to close that deal."

He looked straight ahead. "Well, I hope you're right. Because if you are, and your father is, then I'll be quite a pest around the Frederick household."

"I'm not worried!"

Dane laughed. He felt suddenly very light-hearted, very happy.

When they returned from the ride, Dane found that his wife to Mr. Ludlow had brought results. A yellow envelope awaited him. He tore it open. There was a request that he call at the telegraph office to identify himself before receiving money which had been wired him. Dane slipped out before he went to bed, and received fifty dollars from the clerk.

Dane McGrath reported at Mr. Ludlow's office on Monday morning and laid thirty dollars on his employer's desk. "I'll get the other twenty dollars from—"

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MORE CANADIAN BACON TO GREAT BRITAIN

Exports of Canadian bacon to Great Britain have increased considerably in past years. In 1933 they totalled 71,524,700 pounds, in 1934, they rose to 119,707,600 pounds and in 1935 to 124,327,900 pounds. In 1936 shipments to the British market amounted to 147,688,800 pounds valued at \$25,138,590.

Great care is being taken by Canada to maintain the high quality of her bacon exports to the British market and to assure a continuity of supplies. All packing plants must be licensed to export White Star bacon. The bacon is graded and stamped "Canada," together with the grades A, B, or C. On arrival in England each shipment undergoes an additional inspection by a Canadian government inspector. Each Canadian packing house is required to estimate the amount of bacon it plans to ship each month of the year. This system is designed to keep the shipments within a five per cent. variation in the quantity from week to week in order to prevent wide fluctuations in the supplies going forward.

MAKING ONE'S OPPORTUNITY

If you want to succeed in the world you must make your own opportunities as you go on. The man who waits for some seventh wave to toss him on dry land will find that the seventh wave is a long time coming. You can commit no greater folly than to sit by the roadside until some one comes along and invites you to ride with him to wealth or influence.

Contrast in Official Coronation Coiffures



A striking contrast in hair styles are these coronation coiffures, both officially designated as suitable to wear at the royal ceremonies. That at the LEFT was the style in vogue when Queen Victoria was crowned in 1837; that at the RIGHT is the latest mode approved by the Guild of Hairdressers, Wigmakers and Performers for the crowning of King George and Queen Elizabeth in May.

Smaller Austrian Castle New Residence for Duke of Windsor



By moving in to this castle at St. Wolfgang, Austria, the Duke of Windsor has cut a sizeable slice from the expenses his residence at Enzenfeld Castle, near Vienna, was incurring. With the divorce of Mrs. Wallis Simpson due to become final soon, it is possible that her forecasted marriage with the ex-king might take place there.

"ALL-BRAN KEEPS ME IN SHAPE EVERY DAY"

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Advertisement for CARROLL'S LIMITED featuring various fresh produce like oranges, lettuce, spinach, and grapefruit with prices.

Large advertisement for CARROLL'S LIMITED featuring a fruit sale, damson jam, and various food products like sardines, tea, and waffles.

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