

A REPORTER'S HARD LUCK

A. B. WILLIAMS, one of the leading editors of Virginia, is credited with telling more hard-luck stories and telling them with deeper feeling than any man in his State. Here is one of them:

"One afternoon while I was a poor reporter on one of the big New-York dailies, I had the good luck to be picked up by a rich acquaintance and bowled through the park behind his spanking bays.

"At a turn of the road the new moon swung suddenly into view, and my friend hastily fumbled in his pocket for a coin 'Show up your money, old man,' he said to me. 'It means Luna'll double it before she wanes.'

"The only coin I had in the world was a five-dollar gold piece which stood between me and starvation and death from thirst till next pay-day, but I 'showed up' as if I had been a millionaire with a pocket lined with screaming eagles.

"A little later I bade him good-night and made a dash for the office. On the way my nostrils caught a delicious odor I sniffed and sniffed. 'By the great Dago, roasted chestnuts!' I said to myself, and followed the scent. I bought a nickel's worth, flung down a coin and made a break for the reporters' room, where I scratched away furiously till midnight. Then the pangs of hunger seized me.

"It was only then I realized that I had given my last fiver for an odor, a taste and a few chestnut hulls."

THE NEWS-BEARER

By Morris Wade

OLD Pliny Dart, round-faced and with cheeks like a frost-bitten apple, innocent blue eyes, a perpetual smile, an effeminate voice and as harmless as a dove, was the oracle, the news-bearer, in a New-England rural neighborhood. Always informed on all the pettiest gossip, he loved to impart his information to others, and could be depended upon to tell all that was "going on" in the community. When he called at any of the neighboring farm-houses some one would be sure to ask:

"Well, Uncle Pliny, what's the news?" "Wal, I dunno as there's much of anything wuth speakin' of. I reckon you know they've got another leetle one over to Hi Dabner's?"

"No! Have they?" "Yaas; borned yistiday. It's their tenth; but Hi says the more the merrier. That's the right way to look at it. If there's room in the heart there'll be room in the house for all the leetle folks the good Lord sends one. Sam Moony's mother-in-law passed away las' night."

"Did she?"

"Yes; went off easy as a glove at sixteen minnits after eleven. Good ole woman! I reckon there'll be considerable of a fun'ral with so many kin on both sides o' the house. Elder Stotts is goin' to preach the sermon. Reckon he'll spread hisself, with her bein' the oldest member o' his church. He can't say nothin' but good of her. An' what pies she could make! Dear ole soul! She's in Glory now, an' some one else will have to make the pies at Sam's house. You know they had a bran' new pianny at Lem Thurber's house?"

"I didn't know it." "Got it out o' the fo'teen hundred Lem got for his woodland, an' I reckon they're some set up over it. Lotty Thurber is a born musicker anyhow. She can play one piece with one hand and another piece with the other hand an' sing a third chune all at one time. Music runs in the fam'ly. Lem kin play a reg'lar chune on a common, coarse comb, an' Mis' Thurber kin play the gittar, an' Jim kin beat the band jerkin' music out of a fiddle, an' little Lucy kin play the banjo, an' the hull fam'ly kin whistle like birds. I tell you when they all git to goin' at once it's considable of a concert."

"I should think it would be." "Tis. Did you know that Andy Rice got his wife a new black silk out of the damidge money he got for bein' run into an' all but killed by the cars at that grade crossin'? I reckon his wife thinks it's true that 'all things work together for good.' She's allus wanted a nice black silk, an' I reckon she never would of got it if the railroad hadn't helped her out. Hear about old Silas Thrale gittin' his tombstun?"

"Why, what do you mean?" "Jess what I say. He's got him a real harnson stone an' had it engraved, all but the day of his takin' off, an' has had it set up in the buryin'-ground. Said he wanted to make sure of havin' one an' havin' what he wanted on it."

"What did he have on it?" "Oh, a long string o' stuff settin' off his virtues that nobody ever knowed before that he had. If that ain't vanity croppin' out on a tombstun I dunno what is. Got his wife's age all carved on the stun too, an' they say she's mad as a wet hen about it, for she's been passin' for a good five years younger than that stun says she is. Kind o' funny to see a stun set up an' nobody under it. I'd feel kind o' creepy ev'ry time I saw it, if it was mine. Old Tom Manson has got his pension raised from ten to twelve dollars a month, an' Andy Carnegy ain't in it with old Tom jess now. You'd think to hear him talk that him an' Rock'feller was about on a level. I'm glad he's got it. Them that's fit and bled for their country has a right to be cared for in their old age. It wouldn't s'prise me none if Tom got married ag'in on his extry two dollars a month. Hens layin' much now?"

"Very little." "So it is with ours. Datted things allus git lazy when eggs go up in price. Hear about how old Mis' Drury come out tryin' to make her hens lay?"

"No, how was it?" "Wal, her hens wa'n't layin' to suit her, an' she got some new kind o' stuff to mix in' with their feed, an' you know her eyesight is dreadful poor, an' she got hold of a package of newfangled rat-pizen, stid of the egg-producin' stuff, an' fed a hull package of it to her hens. They laid all right. Still layin', I reckon, an' they won't git up. I happened over there soon after it happened, an' Mis' Drury was yankin' the feathers off the hens, with her teeth set an' breathin' hard. You know she's purty pep'ry in temper, an' she vowed that if she ever come across the man that invented that pizen she'd manage somehow to give him a dose of it. She's got sixteen hundred dollars in the bank an' her place all her own, so she ain't no call to worry over the loss of a few hens; still it was tryin' to lose 'em in that way. Said it spited her so to think of how good some o' them nice plump hens would of eat. Her old Domneck rooster got a dose too, and turned up his toes along with the hens he'd lorded it over so long. Mis' Drury said she'd had that rooster so long she felt like a mother to him. Too bad!

"I must mosey on. Come over when you kin. Allus glad to see you. Hope this good weather will hold out a leetle longer, for then most folks will have their hay in. Good-by."

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