Mrs. Condon's Message.

By W. F. Bryan.

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The porch was a pleasant place in the quiet of the summer afternoon. Mrs. Condon rocked slowly back and forth, pausing now and then in her sewing to look across the broad acres to the wooded patch on the ridge that marked the horizon. It was all hers, the richest farm in Liscom county, and yet she sighed softly as she took up her work again.

"Ma!" Mrs. Condon looked up with a start. Her thoughts had been far back in the past when she was young and as pretty as the girlish figure that stood in the doorway.

"Henry Griswold is coming to see you this afternoon," went on the girl. "He wants to ask you—for me."

With cheeks aflame she leaned forward and buried her face on the elder woman's shoulder. Mrs. Condon pushed her gently away and the gaunt, tired face grew hard.

"Does Hank Griswold want to marry you or the farm?" she demanded bluntly. "It ain't going to do him a mite of good to ask."

"He doesn't want the old farm!" stormed the girl. "We're going to live on his place."

"If he gets you," amended Mrs. Condon. "It won't do a mite o' good to argue, Sue. There ain't no fortune hunter going to marry you."

"He's not a fortune hunter," defended the girl. "It's a cruel, wicked, hateful thing to say!"

"You go right straight into the house," commanded Mrs. Condon, "and don't you come out here again until you can be respectful to your mother."

For a moment the girl paused rebelliously, but habit was stronger than this new mutinous feeling, and slowly she went inside. Mrs. Condon picked up her sewing again, but her hands lay idle in her lap, and tired eyes looked out across the fields. She had paid a bitter price for those broad acres, and Hank Griswold, struggling with his tiny farm, should never be their

SHE WATCHED HIM AS HE WOLFED HIS FOOD.

owner. She had been forced into a loveless marriage by an avaricious father, and her heart had turned to stone. She could not believe in love. It must be the fields that Griswold wanted. It might seem hard to Susie, but it was for the best.

Down the narrow strip of road, running like a dusty river between the green banks of verdure, shambled a bent figure. It turned in at the gate, unmindful of Mrs. Condon's shrill warning that she did not feed tramps.

"I'll work for it," he said eagerly. "I'm willing to pay my way, but you people are so set against tramps that you won't even give me a chance to work for food."

"I suppose you'll tell me next that you're a mechanic on his way to a job that's been promised him," she said scornfully.

"I'm a tramp, a hobo," he said defiantly. "It's all I've been for ten years and more. I only work when I have to, but I'm willing to work now for the sake of food."

Mrs. Condon smiled approvingly. She liked truth even in a tramp.

"I guess there ain't much to do," she said as she rose to her feet. "The wood's all split, and I've got two men for chores, but I'll give you something."

The tramp sank down on the steps, and presently she reappeared with a bowl containing the remnants of a stew and part of a loaf of bread.

She watched him as he wolfed his food, and when he set the bowl down on the porch she nodded approvingly. "I guess you were hungry," she conceded. "We don't like tramps in through here."

"You don't have to tell me," he declared, with a grin. "I knew a chap what came from round here somewhere. He was my side partner for a couple of years. They used to call him 'Starry Sam' because he had bracelets of stars tattooed on his wrists."

"I know the man you mean," she said, with an impassive face, "but I didn't know he was a—tramp."

"There was a woman," explained the tramp, seeing that she was interested and scenting a chance to get food to carry with him on his way.

"He told me the story once. He was in love with a girl, but her old man made her marry a fellow that had money. Sam couldn't stand for seeing her another man's wife, and he lit out.

"He wasn't a hit in the city. His disappointment sorter took the heart out of him."

"I know," she said quietly. "He was killed the next year while saving a little child."

"Killed nothin'!" scoffed the tramp. "That was a stall for the girl he was stuck on. He was down so low he took to the road, and he got the clerk of a lodging house to put up that steer. Said he'd rather have her think he was dead than to guess he'd taken to the road. You know the girl?"

"Yes, I know her."

"Well, don't tell her. Sam was a good fellow. It was only that he didn't have anything to live for. You can't blame him. He's dead now. He got in with some yeggs after he left me and the bulls got him in Chi."

"The bulls got him?" The woman's voice quavered a little.

"That's slang," explained the tramp. "The Chicago policemen started to arrest him, and he tried to run, so they shot him. He was a good man," he added softly. "Say, lady, you couldn't let me have some more bread, could you, to take with me?"

She rose without a word and entered the house, returning presently with a fresh loaf and some cold meat wrapped in a paper. With a word of thanks the tramp slouched off, and the summer stillness fell upon the piazza again.

But the woman's heart throbbed with a dull ache.

"The bulls got him in Chi."

The sentence ran in her brain. So this was the epitaph of her boy lover. The heroic rescue, in which he gave up his life for another, was but a figment of imagination. She shuddered as though she had come in physical contact with the thing that had been her idol and who had become a loathsome, ragged tramp.

Then her thoughts softened. Her visitor had been right. Sam had been different from the practical, unimaginative men with whom he lived. They had made great plans for the future—their future—and disappointment had taken the heart out of him.

A dreamer, men called him; a visionary, who preferred the pen to the plow. It was for this reason that her father had withheld his consent and had forced her into a hateful marriage with Condon.

She sat with idle hands staring across the fields, with eyes that pierced the veil of years. Her eyes were dry. Her tears were long since shed, but the old wound bled afresh.

For years her heart had been as a stone within her breast, but now it softened under the influence of her grief. The sinking sun shot its beams slantwise across the porch and warmed afresh her benumbed sensation. At last she stirred.

"Sue!" she called. The girl, her eyes red and swollen from weeping, appeared in the doorway.

"You'd better bathe your eyes and put on your muslin dress," counseled her mother. "If Hank is coming you'll want to look your best. I'll say 'yes,' my dear. I guess you ought to know better than me whether it's you or the farm he wants. You've got a right to happiness."

"You've thought it over?" asked the girl as she kissed the faded cheek.

"I guess I've had a message from the Lord," she answered, "even though he did pick out a tramp for a messenger."

A Close Call.

We were sitting on the veranda of our bungalow in Burma one evening enjoying our after dinner cheroot. Finally my friend arose and sauntered into his bedroom. Usually lights were placed in all the bedrooms, but this evening for some reason—probably the moonlight—the servant had not performed his duties. I could hear my friend fumbling about on his dressing table, and then suddenly he gave a cry of horror and rushed out to the light.

"I have been struck by a snake," he gasped, and his face was deadly pale.

"Where is it? Quick! Show me!" I exclaimed as I whipped out a knife.

He held out his right arm. There was no mark on the hand, which I examined critically, but on the cuff of the shirt were two tiny scratchlike punctures and two little globules of poison sinking into the starched linen and leaving a sickly greenish yellow mark.

"You've had a close call, old man," I exclaimed, with a sigh of relief, "and now let us settle the snake!"

We found him coiled up on a small mirror which lay on the table, and an ugly looking reptile he was, too, ready to strike again. He was a very poisonous snake, known as the Deboae russelli, but after my friend had done with him it would have been difficult for any naturalist to have placed him in his proper genus.—London Standard.

A Queer Inscription.

A monumental inscription quoted by Mr. Thomas Wainwright in "Devon Notes and Queries" affords an interesting example of the earlier of the uses of the word "umbrella" which are presented in Gay's lines:

Let Persian dames th' umbrella's ribs display
To guard their beauties from the sunny ray;
Or sweating slaves support the shady load
When eastern monarchs show their state abroad;
Britain in winter only knows its aid
To guard from chilly show'rs the walking maid.

Perhaps the word "umbraculum" in the Vulgate version of the history of Jonah suggested to the author of the epitaph to write:

Blest was the prophet in his heavenly shade,
But ah, how soon did his umbrella fade!
Like our frail bodys, whiche, being born of clay,
Spring in a night and wither in a day.

The inscription is on a monument bearing the date 1684.—Notes and Queries.

Hide and Seek in Groups.

Any group of four or more players can have great fun in the woods or where there are tall grass and other objects to hide behind. First two leaders are chosen by any of the usual counting out methods, and these two leaders choose sides. Then there is a toss up to see which side is "it" first. The players on this side all hide their eyes and count together out loud up to, say 300. Meanwhile the players on the other side hasten away in a group and hide as completely as possible.

Then the search begins. When any one of the hunting party discovers the hiding group a great shout or warwhoop is raised, and that side has to count while the other side hides. It should be agreed that certain limits or boundaries are not to be crossed. Where the woods are thick or where there is plenty of underbrush the sport is fine.

OHIO FARMERS

Tell Tax Commission What Taxation Reform They Want.

MANY CHANGES DEMANDED

Most of the Representatives of Agricultural Interests Favor a Constitutional Amendment.

The June meeting of the Tax Commission of Ohio was something of a "farmers' day." The representatives of the great agricultural interests of the state were invited to appear before the commission and discuss taxation. The meeting was the most successful of all of the good ones held so far, and the farmers showed that they understood the big subject. From time to time the discussions of the agriculturists will be run in these columns.

F. A. Derthick of Mantua, Master of the Ohio State Grange, said:

It is conceded that agriculture bears both a realty and personalty tax, because the land and personalty can all be gotten, while the city tax is principally a realty tax.

I like the New York plan. Each taxpayer is given a pamphlet containing the valuation and assessment of every other taxpayer in his zone. From the directory it is learned that John Jones lives at No.— Sixteenth street. No one goes there to see John Jones, or calls him up. It is assumed that if he lives in that environment with all the privileges, he is worth at least $50,000. They send him this notice: "Dear Sir—You are assessed on a valuation of $50,000 and your assessment is so much. If not satisfactory call and see us." If nothing is heard from him they move up on the valuation till he protests. The tax rate in New York city is 1.47 against 3 per cent in Columbus and 3.15 in Cleveland.

To avoid double taxation in mortgages Minnesota enacted a mortgage record tax which went into effect May 1, 1906. The first day about $10,000 was collected from the registration fees of one-fourth of 1 per cent in one county alone, while for the entire previous year less than $5,000 was collected under the uniform rate. After paying a registration fee the mortgage was not further taxed, thus avoiding double taxation so far as mortgages are concerned. The State Grange has for years pronounced against double tax and favors release of tax on mortgages.

While I would rather see, if it could be brought about, all private property taxed, yet if it is not feasible or practicable I would protest against picking out certain forms of intangible property for exemption, as was done in the case of municipal bonds. If one class of intangible is exempted, let all classes be exempt also. I believe that a corporation bond may be more properly exempt than a municipal. The corporation bond, say those who favor exemption of such bonds, is simply a deed. Why tax it? Go to the road; that is the property. If you tax the bond and tax the road that is double taxation. I can see some justice in that. With the municipal bond the thing which it represents can not be taxed, and it escapes also. It is claimed that the difference would be made in the price of bonds, but experience has proven otherwise. Even if a little were saved in the premium it would be made up in the rate.

Dr. Chamberlain's argument of expediency is a good one, I think. With a tax of 3.15 and interest of 4 per cent the Clevelander is not going to list his money on deposit. In Mt. Vernon the tax is 4 per cent and the interest 5 per cent; he is punished a dollar for being honest. In Bellefontaine the banks pay 3 per cent and the tax is 4 per cent. How are you going to get this money on the duplicate. The constitution is ironclad. If it is returned it is struck with the uniform rate.

Under the uniform rate in Maryland the city of Baltimore returned $6,000,000, which yielded a revenue of $90,000. With a flexible rate $100,000,000 was returned, giving an income of $300,000.

The question of distribution is quite as important as collection of funds. I earnestly recommend the enactment of a law providing for a uniform system of bookkeeping for each department, with annual auditing by expert accountants. With this system honestly and earnestly enforced there would not be need of a franchise tax. If such a system is not provided I would favor a franchise tax.

It is far easier to point out inequalities than suggest a panacea, and whoever assumes to point out the unerring way to a sane and perfect system of tax revision in all its details is encouraging us to pursue a will-o-the-wisp. Taxation is a creature of growth. Students of taxation say there is embedded into our constitution an insurmountable barrier to a just system—the uniform rate—and there is now in the hands of the taxation committee of the house a bill which provides for the classification of property. Whether the constitution shall be so amended is the burning question of the hour. The Grange has not yet pronounced on this proposition. Our 500 lodges, ranging in membership from 20 to 400, are studying the question diligently, and I presume the next State Grange will take some position. At the last session by unanimous vote, the State Grange declared its willingness to co-operate with all other interests in promoting such a revision of our tax system as would be just and fair to all classes. As Master of the State Grange I would not undertake to speak for that body till it has declared its position. What I say is the result of my personal convictions and upon my own responsibility. Our constitution was born more than half a century ago and ordained to meet conditions existing then. This revered document is confronted by conditions of which our fathers never dreamed. It is my deliberate opinion that there should now be lodged in some department of the government, directly responsible to the people, authority to revise our system of taxation from time to time as changed conditions, necessities and experience suggest.

The equitable assessment of personal property, much the larger portion of which is invisible, seems so hopeless a problem everywhere that it is leading an increasingly large number of persons to the belief that the tax on that sort of property should be abolished and something in the nature of a graded income tax substituted.—County Board of Assessment, Passaic, N. J.

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THUMPS IN HOGS.

The Cause of This Disease and How to Treat It.

Thumps is a result of certain diseased conditions in the system and is not to be looked upon as a disease itself. The cause in practically all cases is the character of the feed or the way the hogs are kept or a combination of both. It is usually the result of an unhealthy condition of the blood, generally caused by a large number of worms in the intestines caused by overfeeding with lack of sufficient exercise. Rheumatic conditions may cause it, or the irritation caused by a large number of worms in the intestines may be the cause. However, the most frequent cause of the disease is feeding an excess of corn or other foods of like character and not enough nitrogenous foods.

Usually the hogs that suffer from thumps are fat, overfed young hogs, and a feed composed largely of corn would produce this condition. I think the best prevention would be to give a variety of feed or at least to feed less corn and to have the pigs where they could have the run of pasture. Hotel slops would be the kind of material that would produce fat and not muscle, being in this respect like corn. If it is impractical to secure and use feeds of a proteid nature, I would advise feeding less corn to the young hogs until they are a few months old, as every hog raiser who has had experience with the trouble knows that it is the young fat pigs that are generally troubled with the thumps.

If treatment is undertaken at the beginning of the trouble, it is generally successful. At the first indication of the disease give one or two ounces of castor oil as a physic and follow this with tincture of opium and tincture of digitalis, giving twenty drops of each at a dose. Give this every two or three hours, and you can generally relieve most of the cases in from twelve to fifteen hours. If the pig is much exhausted, you can combine with the above one-eighth ounce of aromatic spirits of ammonia in a little cold water. Unless the pig is quite sick and will refuse feed the best way to give such medicine as recommended above is to give it in a small amount of feed, as milk or wet ground feed. If necessary to give the medicine by hand, take a large spoon and place the medicine as far back in the mouth as possible. Never give medicine to a pig while it is struggling or squealing, as it is liable to get it into the windpipe.—L. L. Lewis in Oklahoma Farm Journal.

Dry Cured Pork.

For each hundred pounds of meat weigh out five pounds of salt, two pounds of granulated sugar and two ounces of saltpeter and mix them thoroughly. Rub the meat once every three days with a third of the mixture. While the meat is curing in this manner it is best to have it packed in a barrel or tight box. For the sake of convenience it is advisable to have two barrels and to transfer the meat from one to the other each time it is rubbed. After the last rubbing the meat should lie in the barrel for a week or ten days, when it will be cured and ready to smoke. To cure nicely it is desirable to have a cool and rather moist place in which to keep it. This recipe should not be used where the meat must be kept in a warm and dry place, as the preservatives will not penetrate easily and uniformly.—National Provisioner.

Stallions Should Wear a Shield.

The Horse Breeder says that every stallion that is two years old or upward should be made to wear a good stallion shield at all times when standing in the stall. A neglect of this precaution has caused the ruin of many promising colts that but for this would have developed into successful turf performers and valuable stock horses.

THE SHEPHERD.

There is quality of water as well as quality of food.

If the ewes have nothing but corn, they will lack milk and be feverish. Don't call this "bad luck."

When lambs are two weeks old they will begin to eat bran and linseed meal. Give it to them and see how they will grow.

Don't expect feeders to realize fat lamb prices, or, in other words, don't market half fat lambs.

It does not cost as much to raise pure bred sheep as scrub sheep, judging by the way our books balance, says the American Sheep Breeder.

The feeding racks should be cleaned after every feeding, as the sheep never relish fodder that has been breathed on. Always have a good clean supply of water.

Do not confine sheep during hot days where they cannot get shade and seclusion from the flies. A darkened stable or outbuilding is enjoyed by them.

Keep the lambs growing. A stunted lamb never makes a good sheep.

Keep the drinking vessels absolutely clean, and give fresh water often.

Hay should not be carried over the backs of sheep when it can be avoided, as it causes the fleece to become full of seed and dirt.

The sheep bell may not scare the dogs, but they may warn you of their presence.

A poor sheep produces a harsh, weak wool, lacking luster. The well conditioned sheep produces an oil for the fleece that is essential to good fiber, soft texture of the wool and a bright, attractive look. Any check in the growth of the sheep can be detected in the fleece. The wool produced at this time is of poorer quality. The fleece of a poor sheep can be picked from a collection.—Farm Journal.

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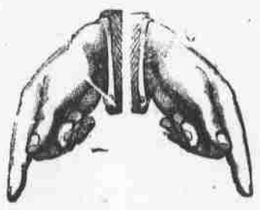

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