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crammed full of cough lozenges and soda. Now more departed my train, their pockets and mouths stuffed with the delicacies from Henry Davis's. At last I found myself alone!

MY pockets were stuffed to the brim with an assortment of possessions I could not catalogue. My shirt bulged with candy, dried apples, figs, crackers, and a few dime novels. My stomach—ah, my poor, innocent, foolish little stomach!—who shall describe its contents? It had feasted all afternoon on those things that the wisdom of my parents had forbidden it always. It had eaten all the raisins it wanted, all the egg biscuit it craved, all the citron—I hate to think of citron—it could hold,—everything, everything it ought not to have had. And with all this was mixed a quantity of lemon pop, and ginger ale, and soda water—enough to have floated two craft of my draft!

Yet the madness of wealth had not yet left me. I still had the desire to spend money. But how? I thought of everything that I had ever wanted. Nothing tempted me. I had had them all; or, if I had not, I could have had them, which was the same thing. Ah, well, I thought, never mind. My money's all gone, anyway. Now for home and the anger of my parents!

JUST then I chanced to put my hand into one of my pockets, and to my dismay it touched coin. I fished around, and drew out a full handful of nickels, dimes, three-cent pieces, and a few quarters. Good heavens! There was more left!

I shuddered as I realized that I must spend this. I dared not go home with any money left; for I was laboring under the idea that, with my pockets empty of cash, I should be able to escape all suspicion of having had any. I never dreamed that the story of my wild financial orgy would reach my parents. How innocent I was of the power of gossip!

I rose to my feet heavily; for the burden of my feast weighed me down. I again turned my face in the direction of the village. Where was I to go?

The drugstore? I had bought it out! The grocer's? I had left his shelves bare and depleted his stock of dried apples! One Arm Jake's? What was there to be bought in One Arm Jake's that I had not sampled? Aha! I had it! I suddenly realized that in Mrs. Hoogly's store, next door to One Arm Jake's, was a treasure that I could buy and exhaust all my money at one fell swoop—provided Mrs. Hoogly would sell it, and that I still possessed sufficient fortune to pay for it.

Mrs. Hoogly kept a thread and yarn shop. At least, that was all I had ever bought there when my mother had sent me shopping for her. But in Mrs. Hoogly's window was a beautiful thing, a stuffed duck, standing on a little bit of sandy beach, with seashells around its feet. I had always wanted that duck. I had looked at it so often that I knew its every feather, and could tell just how long ago it began to shed the plumage on its left side, where the moths had attacked it.

Mrs. Hoogly was just getting ready to close up, for it was nearly suppertime; but she let me in, smiling through her glasses. "Hello, Paulie," said she. "What does your mama want?"

"She—she wants that—that—how much is that duck in the window, Mrs. Hoogly?" "Duck!" she exclaimed. "Why, what are you talking about?"

"The duck in the window," said I. "You know. Can—I buy it?"

"Why, I never!" said the old lady. "What do you want of that old motheaten stuffed duck? I just keep it in the window because I ain't never thought to throw it out. I was thinkin' of throwin' it away the other day, too. Do you want it?"

"Y-yes," said I. "How much is it? 'Cause, if—"

"Why, you sha'n't pay a cent for the old thing," said she, parting the little lace curtains at her window and taking the beautiful duck out. "Here it is, and you're welcome to it. Now you'd better run along home, or your mother'll be missin' you."

I APPROACHED the house from the back way, through the six-acre lot. As it came in view I realized that supper must be ready, and yet I wasn't in the least hungry. I wondered why. Usually at this time I had a ravenous appetite; but now food seemed rather unnecessary. Perhaps it was because I had eaten so much. And then the real thought struck me. Here I was still loaded down with the booty of my day's dissipation! What should I do with it?

There was a little summerhouse in the six-acre field. I crept into it, and under a seat I deposited my store,—jawbreakers, dime novels, molasses hunks,—everything I had bought, except the stuffed duck. I

could not trust that precious thing to the elements of a summer's night. And, strange to say, I did not put it down as worthless compared to all those things for which I had paid real money.

I remember that I was accused of being late on every ground but the true one. I was tempted to eat my supper; but—oh, how it did hate to pass my tired lips! I was hot, weary, afraid.

I went to bed very early, and without urging. The conglomeration in my interior was beginning to assert its wrath. But before I got into bed I cached the rest of my money. I had a place for it.

There was a register at the baseboard. I could take this out, and in, to one side of it, as far back as my hand could reach, was a receptacle capable of holding many things. Novels, candy, "secret language" letters, such things, I had stored there before now. And here I put my handful of coins, heaving a sigh of relief as I let them fall in among the dust of the place.

I HAD just tumbled into bed when the doorbell rang. I wondered who it could be, and in a moment I knew. "Good evening, Miss Anderson!"

Great rattans! It was Red Head! She had come to tell on me! Oh, what a reckoning was in store for me! Oh, how sorry I was that I had not brought my financial find home intact! Oh—Oh—Oh!

I lay clinging to the sheets in fear and trembling. Awful thoughts came to my mind. Perhaps I had better rise and dress and run away. I could go down the cherry tree whose branches swept the window of my room! I might be able to escape by the back stairs! Yet I hated to go without kissing my mother goodby!

Again, it occurred to me what a noble thing it would be for me to get up, take my money out of its hiding place, and walk down stairs into the parlor, to make a full confession in the presence of Red Head, my father, and my mother. But what would the result be? Would I be forgiven? Perhaps not. And my father wielded a heavy hand at times. Perhaps I could deny it all; but Red Head and the evidence!

The bell rang again. It was Archie Howland's father. "Say," I heard him say to my father, as they went into the parlor, "I wonder if you know about that small boy of yours. Why—" But the rest was shut out by the closing of the parlor door.

I must have fallen asleep; for I seemed to be awakened by a sudden light. I opened my eyes and looked. Outside my room was my father with a candle, and behind him came my mother. I closed my eyes, and kept them closed. They entered my room softly.

"Careful!" said my mother. "Don't wake him till we've looked. Where are his trousers?"

I heard them searching my little linen knickerbockers, and I knew what for.

"He hasn't any of it in his pockets," said my father. "How about his shirt?"

"No pockets," said my mother. "Sometimes he hides things under his rag rug. 'No, there's nothing there.'"

"We'll have to wake him up," said my father. "He must have more somewhere. Wonder where in time he got it, anyway? I'm sure I haven't missed any, and you say you haven't."

"Don't wake the poor little chap," said my mother. "He's had an awful day, and tomorrow will be time enough. I suppose he and half the children in the neighborhood will be sick."

"Feel his head," said my father.

I felt my mother's soft touch on my brow, smoothing the hair back from my forehead. Oh, it was so good! I wanted to turn over, open my eyes, and clasp her in my arms. If she had been alone I should have done so, and have told her all, there and then.

But there was my father! I feared his wrath. So I still pretended to be asleep.

"Well, by jings!" I heard my father say finally. "I give it up. We'll have to wait till morning. Come on."

And they went out.

BUT I could not sleep, and all night long I tossed and turned, guilt upon my heart, food poison upon my poor little stomach. I rose with the first blush of dawn and dressed, sick as I was. I took out my register and fished out the cursed coin. Then, holding it in my hands, I stole into my father's room. He was asleep. I laid the coins on his bed and started out; but he awoke and saw me.

"Paulie!" he exclaimed.

I rushed to my mother's bed in the adjoining room and threw myself into her protecting arms, and tried to tell her my awful story. And Father came in, and leaned over me, and soothed me, and—and—and I just broke down and cried, and had a fever. And it was all right!



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