STORIES OF THE FAKIRS

By
J. P. JOHNSTON

Author of "Twenty Years of Hus'ling," "What Happened to Johnston," Etc.

"EASY MONEY" IN SPECTACLES.

A Yale Graduate's Grafting Scheme—Made $200 Weekly Duping Women of Middle and Lower Classes—Six Days a Peddler, One a Society Man—Foisting Worthless Glasses on Business Men—Finished in Penitentiary.

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Some years ago, while closing out a bankrupt stock of jewelry, I opened up a store on Sixty-third street, in Englewood, Chicago.

One day a very tall man, dressed in overalls, blouse, stogy boots and Scotch cap, came into the store. He carried in one hand two or three large potatoes. Stepping up to me, he extended his right hand and said:

"How are you, J. P.? Glad to see you; don't know me, do you?"

At first I didn't recognize him, but when he introduced himself as Mr. ——, I instantly remembered him. He was a former Chicago acquaintance, who for several years had held a responsible position with one of the largest wholesale dry goods houses in the city. He was a Yale college graduate, of an excellent family. Of course I was astounded to see him in such a garb.

"What in the world are you doing?" I asked.

"Making $25 per day," he replied

"How, selling potatoes?" I inquired.

"Grafting," he went on; "just grafting."

Taking me to the front door, he pointed out a rickety old peddler's wagon, loaded with choice potatoes, and drawn by a bony old horse with a played-out harness. There was a colored boy on the front seat.

"That's my lay-out; what do you think of it?" he said.

"But," I asked, "how can you do any grafting in the potato business?"

Reaching in his pockets, he produced several pairs of spectacles, and proceeded to explain his system of graft.

The colored boy drove the old horse, while he made house to house calls; always among the middle and lower classes of people.

He would rap at the rear door, and there the lady of the house would find him with both hands full of those very choice potatoes. He would offer to sell her a peck or half bushel at one-half or two-thirds the regular market price.

As this class of women are invariably looking for bargains, he had no trouble in persuading them to make purchases. This much accomplished, he had gained at least one point, and often two. In the first place he had broken the ice, and in many instances he had an opportunity to size up the woman's financial standing. Should he have occasion to change a five or even a two-dollar bill, the prospects were good.

The potato deal closed, he would bring forth a pair of glittering riding bow spectacles from his pocket and say:

"See what I found over on the boulevard a few minutes ago. Aren't they beauties?"

"My! My!" the woman would exclaim, and would immediately try them on. As they were but ordinary window glass, she would look around a moment and declare that she could see "just fine."

SHE WOULD LOOK AROUND A MOMENT AND DECLARE THAT SHE COULD SEE JUST FINE.

"Are they gold?" she would invariably ask.

"Can't you see what they are? I'll bet they never cost less than $12 or $15," he would answer.

Then, as if about to take his departure, he would casually remark that he had no earthly use for them and would sell them cheap.

"How cheap?" would usually come the query.

In setting a price, of course the grafter would be governed by the general appearance of the woman and often by his knowledge of how much cash she had on hand.

His price was all the way from two to five dollars, though he would accept one dollar, but nothing less. Occasionally he made a sale at five dollars, but two dollars was the popular price.

He further explained that he carried in his right hand, upper vest pocket a pair of lenses of the right refractive power for a person of about 40 years of age, in his left hand upper vest pocket a pair for a person of about 50 years of age, and in one coat pocket a pair for a person of 60, and so on.

Should his spectacle transaction take place in the house where the woman would be likely to pick up a newspaper, he would thus be able to give her a magnifying glass. Should she remark that they were not just right, he would say that he was sorry and would place them back in his pocket. Then suddenly reaching to another pocket, he would bring forth another pair, either weaker or stronger, and say:

"See here, I believe these glasses are all right for you; suppose you try them again. Perhaps you were a little nervous when you tried them before." And he would continue to make these shifts from one pocket to the other until the woman imagined, at least, that she could see all right, and then, if possible, he would close a deal.

On the other hand, should the transaction take place in the street, he would introduce a pair of what are known as plano lenses, which are nothing more than ordinary window glass. With these no matter what her age a woman could see off into the distance, and often bought them on the spur of the moment, believing they would also enable her to do close work.

All was fish that came to this grafter's net. The spectacles cost him $2.75 per dozen. The material was "Roman alloy," which will tarnish and get black within three days after coming in contact with the face.

This man declared that he had for years been working on what he considered a paltry salary. His father, who had been well to do, had recently died leaving his estate so entangled that it would cost more to unravel it than it was worth. As a result the son had grown desperate and had started out to make a "killing."

The following Saturday evening, while at the theater, I saw this "grafter" enter one of the boxes with a party of society people. He wore a full-dress evening suit, an elegant silk-lined overcoat and diamonds. Happening to spy me in the parquet, he placed the thumb and forefinger of each hand together, and laughingly held them up to his eyes, in a manner to suggest spectacles.

Two weeks later I opened a store under the Great Northern hotel.

One Saturday afternoon this "grafter" called on me. He told me that for the past three or four weeks his profits had averaged $200 a week. On this occasion he was dressed in an up-to-date business suit, fine derby hat and low-cut shoes, and had the appearance of a well-to-do professional or business man.

"J. P.," he said, "although I always take a vacation on Saturday, I nevertheless clear ten dollars or more. Not that I particularly need it," he went on, "but just to keep my hand in."

So saying, he took from his pocket a half dozen pair of nose glasses, of the same quality as his spectacle stock.

As we stood looking from my store window, he said: "I'll just watch for my man and show you how easy it is to make a dollar." Then he gathered some mud from his shoes and rubbed it over a pair of his eye-glasses.

"There comes my man," he cried, an instant later. "Now watch me."

Darting from the store, he quickly stepped into the gutter, in front of "his man," and, reaching down, took particular pains to attract the man's attention. He rose with the pair of nose glasses in his hand.

Of course the mud and clay clinging to the glasses gave them the appearance of having lain for some time in the dirt.

The man was at once interested and, putting them on his nose, he took some printed matter from his pocket and began reading, saying: "They just fit me."

"Well," said the 'grafter,' "give me five dollars and you may have them, and I'll bet they never cost less than ten dollars."

"No," said the man, "I wouldn't do that, but I'll give you two dollars for them."

"Make it three dollars and take them along," urged the grafter.

"No," hesitated the victim, "but I'll split the difference and give you two dollars and a half for them."

"All right," laughed the grafter, "take them along; they are no good to me."

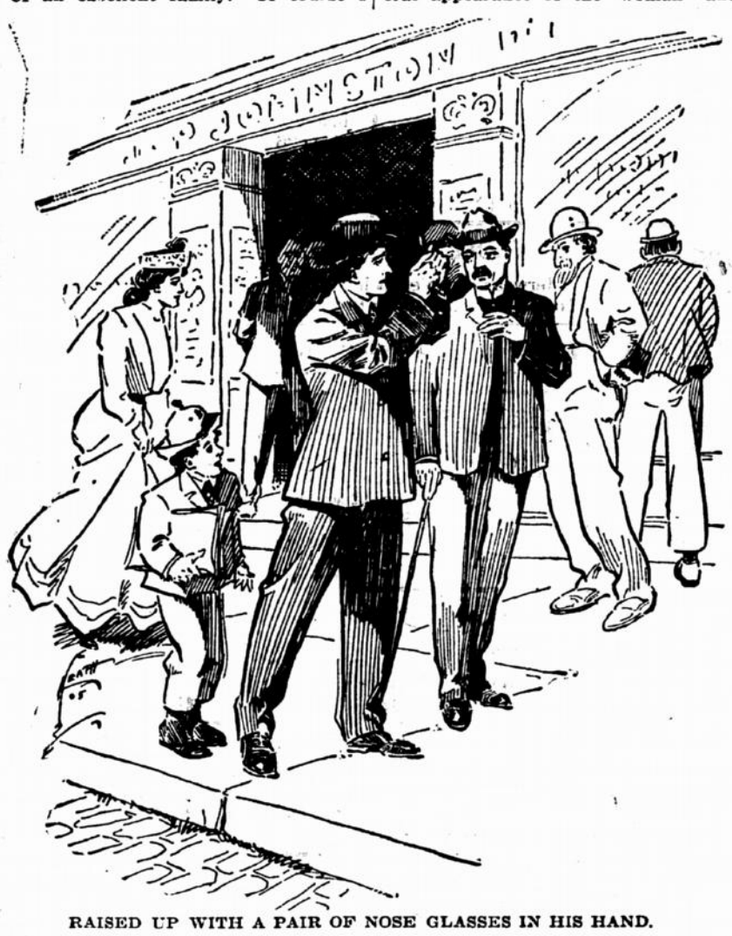
The man paid the money and passed on with a satisfied smile.

The grafter laughed immoderately at his success and declared that there was always something ridiculously funny in every deal of this kind.

In selecting his dupe, he kept his eyes open for a well-dressed man, of business-like appearance, and of about 50 years of age. The glasses were of the proper refractive power to magnify the letters for such a person. They cost him less than 20 cents per pair.

Twenty minutes later the "grafter" bade me good-by. Meeting another man not three rods away, he played the same trick on him, and "landed" him for two dollars inside of five minutes. Looking toward the store, where myself and clerks were interested spectators, he held up two fingers, indicating the amount of cash received.

I last heard of our college graduate grafter two years later. I read a full account of his implication with a gang of "get-rich-quick" sharpers, all of whom had been sentenced to from one to five years each in the penitentiary.



RAISED UP WITH A PAIR OF NOSE GLASSES IN HIS HAND.

Musicians All Cranks.

Prof. Frank J. Fitzgerald, dean of the music department of the Iowa Industrial School for Girls, declares that all professional musicians are cranks, and that many of them are insane.

Pretty Good Indication.

Gerald.—I wonder whether I shall be numbered with the sheep or the goats on the day of judgment?

Geraldine—Well, you are always butting in.—Judge.

POULTRY AND BEES

MOVABLE BEE HOUSE.

Handy, Light Structure Which Will Save Much Time and Excitement When Handling Bees.

A handy house for beekeepers which will save much time and excitement in the apiary is shown in the cut, says Farm and Home. It is made of light material and can be easily moved by hand. The corner posts are of elm one by one and one-half inches. The bottom and top bars are of pine of the same dimensions. The frame of the hinged top and the braces are made of lighter material.

HANDY TENT FOR BEEKEEPERS.

The tent is five and one-half feet high, three feet wide and four feet long.. It is hinged together at each joint. The top frame fits inside the framework of the tent, being fastened down on with two hooks inside. This holds the tent open and in position. In the cut the top is shown thrown back. The covering is of strong cotton cloth, except a piece 18 inches wide of wire netting on each side, which gives more light and air.

SELLING UNRIPE HONEY.

It Will Always Hurt the Business of the Honey Raiser as Well as the Honest Competitor.

The bee-keeper who places unripe honey on the market, is not insuring his own business as a honey producer, but is injuring the business of everyone else who produces honey for the markets. Nectar not properly evaporated and ripened is a long way off from being honey, in the sense that honey should be taken either for food or medicine.

It is a great pity, says the Midland Farmer, that all kinds of business have their scalpers who desire to place their products on the market unfinished and incomplete. For years the producers of farm butter have suffered the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars from this cause alone, and now the shiftless honey producer is coming in for his share of the loss in his great hurry to get his so-called honey upon the market before the bees have had time to evaporate the water therefrom and ripen it so that it may be called honey. If consumers would refuse to have a thing to do with so-called honeys which do not weigh 12 pounds to the gallon, it might be that the shiftless producer of nectar for the market would be compelled to keep his product until it was fully ripened.

HOW TO MANAGE.

Some Hints as to How to Improve the Quality of Your Hens—Need Care and Thought.

Select a half dozen hens which suit the eye—hens that sing and are always busy; breed to best full-blooded cock available; keep in a roomy breeding pen; give them special care; raise the entire flock for ensuing year from this pen; and keep this up from year to year.

Stimulate hens to lay. Overhaul their quarters and make warmer, airier, sunnier; give a variety of grains, chiefly wheat; a stiff meal mash once a day; make them scratch to get grains; give fresh bone crushed small enough to swallow whole, a teaspoonful per day per hen.

Amuse them by some new feed, as a cabbage head or boiled bone hung up for them to jump up and pick; or set a four-bushel box in the pen having clover chaff in it and a sprinkle of sunflower seed in the chaff. They won't lay while suffering from ennui.

Keep "Smart Alec" pullets, not yet laying, apart from laying hens; for they know by instinct that meddlesome pullets will tear up their nests for the expectant bug faster than they can remake them, hence won't lay at all.

Feeding the Male Bird.

See that the male in the breeding pen gets a sufficient quantity of food to keep him healthy and vigorous. Occasionally a male bird is so gallant that he will allow the females to consume most of the food, if not all of it, and he will go hungry. In this case it is a good idea to place him in a pen by himself at feeding time and see that he gets sufficient food, after which put him back in the pen with the females. Unless the male bird is kept healthy and vigorous, good results cannot be expected from the mating.

Too Much Corn.

One man says he has had no eggs all winter, but his hens are fat and he feeds them well. That is just the trouble—too much corn. It is almost as hard for a hen to make eggs out of corn as it is for a man to coin gold dollars out of junk iron. Feed something with the corn.

HOW A FRIENDSHIP GREW

The Story

Whether Hand Sapolio got a more enthusiastic welcome in homes where Sapolio was an old and tried friend, or where it was a stranger, is a question. Where women had come to rely on Sapolio for rapid, thorough cleaning in every part of the house except the laundry, they commenced without loss of time, to avail of this new prize. Grubby little hands, and stained, work-worn older ones, whitened, softened, and smoothed out as if by magic, callous spots disappeared, and complexions cleared. Children ceased their strenuous objections to the scrubbing up process, because it became a

Do you want a clear and healthy skin?

pleasure. It freshened up the hands after dish-washing, removing the most disagreeable feature of that necessary task. It was found to keep delicate baby skins from chafing better than salve or powder, and the crowning note in the song of delight came when an adult member of the family used it in a full bath, and realized that a Turkish Bath at a cost of one dollar was outdone by a small fraction of the little, ten-cent, velvety cake.

But, strange though it may seem, there were people who had not learned to prize Sapolio. To these the advertising of Hand Sapolio came as a surprise. Sapolio, a scouring soap,

THE FIRST STEP away from self-respect is lack of care in personal cleanliness: the first move in building up a proper pride in man, woman, or child is a visit to the bathtub. You can't be healthy, or pretty, or even good, unless you are clean. Use HAND SAPOLIO. It pleases everyone.

adapted for the hands, the face, the general toilet? Impossible, it would be horrid. Who ever heard of such a use? Finally a bold shopper carried home a cake. Does it look like kitchen Sapolio? No one is sure, and a cake of that is bought, and comparison made. Behold a family using both the Sapolios for every conceivable purpose, and comparing notes! After easily and quickly cleansing a greasy pan with Sapolio, Jane thought the other would be gritty, and was astonished at the smooth, dainty lather. Another was certain it would harden the hands and could scarcely realize how soft and "comfy" they felt after the washing.

Then began the excitement of adventure; what would the new soap NOT do? A girl tried a shampoo. Her hair, pretty, soft and silky "went up" perfectly, with none of the unmanageableness that generally exists for a full week after the usual process. A man used the delightful lather for shaving, and felt no need for

WHY TAKE DAINTY CARE of your mouth and neglect your pores, the myriad mouths of your skin? HAND SAPOLIO does not gloss them over, or chemically dissolve their health-giving oils, yet clears them thoroughly by a method of its own.

cold cream afterwards. A pimply face was treated to a daily bathing with the full suds, and promptly became clear. Tartar on the teeth yielded to it, and feet that had a tendency towards hardening of the skin regained their natural condition, till another family had joined the chorus of friendly acclaim. And so it is everywhere, those who know the "elder brother" welcome the new-comer for the sake of the first known, and those who meet both for the first time are plunged into a whimsical worry as to which they could better spare if they had to make a choice.

TRY HAND SAPOLIO.
Its steady use will keep the hands of any busy woman as white, untanned and pretty as if she was under the constant care of a city manicure. It is truly "The Dainty Woman's Friend," in the suburbs or on the farm.

Those ugly dark brown streaks on the neck, arising from tight collars, and the line where the sunburn stops, can be wiped out by the velvety lather of HAND SAPOLIO. It is, indeed, "The Dainty Woman's Friend."

THE DISTRICT SCHOOL OF SPOTLESS TOWN
CLASS IN ALGEBRA

Let housewife equal X plus E; X+E
Let E the sign for Sapolio be; E
For dirt let minus X be had; −X
Then all these symbols we will add.
The X and minus X drop out EE
(As anyone can see no doubt)
And leave what must the housewife please—
The happy symbol we call ease.

Hard Record to Beat.

Friend—Do you think that automobiles will eventually take the lpace of the railroads?

Auto Enthusiast (gloomily)—I hardly think so. The railroad killed 15,000 people last year in this country alone.—Chicago Tribune.

The Erie Railroad has arranged for the immediate expenditure of $225,000 for the installation of the most modern and efficient railway signal that has yet been put on the market. It is known as the Hall Electric Semaphore Normal Clear System, and is operated by stationary storage batteries. The line between Bergen, N. J., and Middletown, a distance of 63 miles, is to be equipped at once. For the first 32 miles, the signals will be put two-thirds of a mile apart; for the rest of the distance, about one and one-third miles apart. It will require five power plants for charging the batteries, which will be located at Rutherford Junction, Ridgewood Junction, Suffern, Oxford and Middletown. The line to be protected has two and four tracks at different places, and is the most congested part of the Erie System. Hitherto a manual block, which is a tower with signals operated by a towerman, has been used as a block protection, but it has been deemed best to install an automatic system for further protection, and to accelerate the movement of trains. The new system will be extended over the entire line in the future.

"De man wif a clean conscience," said Uncle Eben, "feels mighty comfortable, but he doesn' do near de braggin' of de man wif no conscience at all."—Washington Star.

W. L. DOUGLAS $3.50 & $3.00 SHOES FOR MEN

W. L. Douglas $4.00 Gilt Edge Line cannot be equalled at any price.

W. L. DOUGLAS MAKES AND SELLS MORE MEN'S $3.50 SHOES THAN ANY OTHER MANUFACTURER.

$10,000 REWARD to anyone who can disprove this statement.

W. L. Douglas $3.50 shoes have by their excellent style, easy fitting, and superior wearing qualities, achieved the largest sale of any $3.50 shoe in the world. They are just as good as those that cost you $5.00 to $7.00—the only difference is the price. If I could take you into my factory at Brockton, Mass., the largest in the world under one roof making men's fine shoes, and show you the care with which every pair of Douglas shoes is made, you would realize why W. L. Douglas $3.50 shoes are the best shoes produced in the world.

If I could show you the difference between the shoes made in my factory and those of other makes, you would understand why Douglas $3.50 shoes cost more to make, why they hold their shape, fit better, wear longer, and are of greater intrinsic value than any other $3.50 shoe on the market to-day.

W. L. Douglas Strong Made Shoes for Men, $2.50, $2.00. Boys' School & Brass Shoes, $2.50, $2, $1.75, $1.50

CAUTION.—Insist upon having W. L. Douglas shoes. Take no substitute. None genuine without his name and price stamped on bottom.

WANTED. A shoe dealer in every town where W. L. Douglas Shoes are not sold. Full line of samples sent free for inspection upon request.

Fast Color Eyelets used; they will not wear brassy.

Write for Illustrated Catalog of Fall Styles.
W. L. DOUGLAS, Brockton, Mass.

BEST BY TEST

"I have tried all kinds of waterproof clothing and have never found anything at any price to compare with your Fish Brand for protection from all kinds of weather."

(The name and address of the writer of this unsolicited letter may be had upon application)

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