The Other Side of Boss

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BOSS'S grave is back of Boulder; but Boss's grave is empty. On a rise of ground in a clearing in the redwoods it was dug—dug roughly, hurriedly. It is big enough for a giant, deep enough even to satisfy those who made it, deep enough even for Boss. It is at the very edge of the forest. At its head a giant redwood towers and, if you know and look up into the motionless green of the tree, you may see, dangling from its great arm, the end of an old rope. The grave was dug at night and its diggers showed no light; they were not particular about the shape of the hole they made so long as it was deep. "Deep, anyhow, deep as can be, so's he'll stay," as one said, "with a rock to rest his thoughts on." And it is not so very long ago that it was dug, not so long ago as the redwoods count the time.

Nightmare, where they knew about it, was one of the most refining logging camps in the Big Basin. It was a shame that it should have been called Nightmare, but Knight, its first settler, had had a habit of "throwing fits," and while there was more than hereditary excuse for such unseemly actions on his part, there seemed no better reasons for calling the place after any other of the names that were suggested. They were all bad enough as names, all properly appropriate as characterizing the early atmosphere of the locality. And yet, from the purely physical side, there is no more beautiful spot in all the Coast Range of mountains. In the very heart of the redwoods, on a cleared rise of ground overlooking the tumbling waters of Boulder Creek, Knight had found a site for his cabin of shakes that an artist might have dreamed. But Knight's dreams were practical. He saw a fortune in the vast forests of redwood about him and settled there to own, rather than love, the land. That was long ago. He lived elsewhere now, and a foreign doctor of great renown, and little romance, had cured him of the fits, though Nightmare could not, would not, change its name.

Boss Biddle was the overseer at the logging mill, the man its owner had put in charge to look out for his interests, and, from that standpoint, its owner had chosen well. To the men at the camp he was a bear, a human bear, but a bear nevertheless, a bear that had not been tamed even by the refining influences of Nightmare. Big, burly, brusque, with red hair, red face, red eyes almost, Boss cowed the men until they were in reality not men, but slaves. They worked for him at the mill or chopped for him in the hills for bread; they got nothing else, unless the mere life of the air they worked in, the quiet, simple joy of a pipe at nightfall amid the great trees with the waters of Boulder rushing along below them, a sunrise perhaps—unless such things were worth considering. Boss was their master in every way. He was not alone their manager in the business sense; his personality overpowered them, suppressed them cheated them of their right even to the pleasure in the work they lived by; and they hated him.

He must have known it. He must have seen it. A blind man might have warned him. Self-preservation surely was a sense he knew not, as he knew not fear. The mutterings of the men, their sullen looks, he minded no more than he minded the shifting fog drifting in at night. Time and time again they had tried to get rid of him. They had written to Knight himself and to his agent in town. They had planned, they had plotted, and, yes, they had even prayed, such of them as knew how, but Boss was still their master.

One morning, however, a new plan was suggested to them, and before night, as one man, the camp had decided to carry it out.

Jim Griffith, the sawyer, had been found on the rocks of the creek below the mill dump, dead. Griffith had been their leader, the head of the movement against Boss, and the one man whose voice might have aroused them to or prevailed against the step they had decided upon in his name. But Griffith was dead. Work at the mill stopped—not because Griffeth was dead, but because Boss could get no other sawyer to take the dead man's place. All day long knots of men gathered at his cabin to look at his broken clay. There was little said. It was plain enough. But had he really fallen down the dump to his death? What was this story, growing, growing, of a row he had had with Boss, of words and oaths that had been overheard between them, of a blow, even, that Boss had struck? Who started it? Was it true? Quien sabe? It was there strong enough, and Judge Lynch believed it and took up the case. It was to have its hearing that night.

The fog came in not farther than the crest of the ridge. There its gray roll rested, waited. The spot selected was a mile back of the camp and higher up the mountain—so high, indeed, that the top of the great redwood, beneath which men were digging, was shrouded in mist. Silence and darkness reigned. There was a chill in the air—the spicy damp of the shadowless woods about, the salty breath of the fog above. The men shivered as they worked. Now and again a pick clicked on a rock, a spade grated over gravel, a stone slipped from the loosened earth and plunged away down the mountain side. One of the men laughed, a short, mirthless chuckle, which died away in the grave itself as, bending over to smooth the earthly bed, he was lost in the depths of the hole.

"Deep enough?" one of them asked down to him.

"Sure, it is, so's he'll stay all right," he answered up. "Give us a rock to rest his thoughts on." And together two of them rolled a boulder to the edge of the pit and tumbled it in.

The work finished, they sat down on the pile of dirt they had thrown up to wait. The gray fog over the range in the west sifted lower and lower among the trees until it seemed a wall pressing down upon them, pressing down upon them the silence of eternity, the silence of the redwoods at night. But as they waited the east grew bright; a host of giant trees rose gravely out of the night and stalked along the range before them, sharp, black silhouettes against the coming light, and slowly, majestically, a full moon rose over the Big Basin. The men beheld its coming with awe. The blackness about them was drawn from the earth—down the face of the mountain, across the basin, and up the range it trailed away and the air grew luminous. A thin mist hung above the valley, above the range in the west the fog lay, a vein of gleaming silver.

There was the sound of breaking brush coming towards them, and the men sprang to their feet. Someone hallooed; a halloo answered. The voices were like the hoots of owls, low, hollow, melancholy. But it was a single man that pushed into the clearing, breathless; they had waited for more.

"What's wrong?" they demanded in a breath.

"He's gone," the messenger answered. "Only the Chinaman at his cabin. Says he's gone to Boulder to see his girl."

"To w-h-a-t!"

"To see his girl."

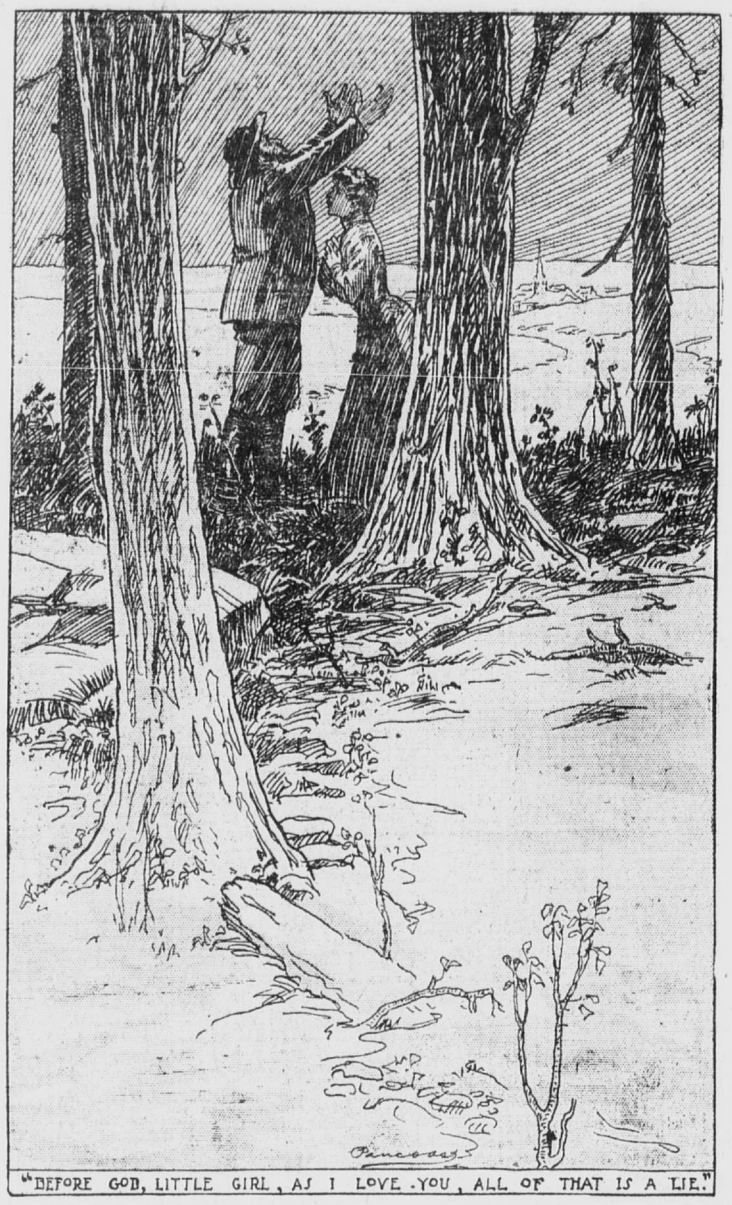
"His girl?" the men laughed derisively. "His girl. His girl's good. He's on to our game and skipped; that's his girl."

"Oh, it's a girl all right. The coolie says he goes all the time, every night; comes back at midnight."

"They waiting for him?"

"No, going after him. They're waiting for you at the creek now."

Down in the valley, at the edge of the Big Basin, the men from the mountain found their fellow, and together they pushed on down the road to the settlement after their man. The girl idea impressed them all alike. Boss had skipped. The Chinaman's story was a part of it. He had reasoned that they would believe it and wait for him. They would believe it when Boss had wings. The wings he was using now were of another kind, for another purpose. Why had they blundered so and let their man get away? Once out of the basin and the game was up. He was hours ahead of them, well mounted, of course, with good reasons to hurry. Some of them were for giving it up, for turning back, but the majority prevailed. They would go at least to the settlement, satisfy themselves that the Chinaman was lying, do what they could to intercept the fugitive. As they went on one or two of them recalled that they had seen Boss leave the camp at nightfall now and then; but no, there could be nothing in the girl story; it was too preposterous, too impossible. Boss and a girl! Boss with another instinct than that of the bully! Another Boss! It was absurd.



"BEFORE GOD, LITTLE GIRL, AS I LOVE YOU, ALL OF THAT IS A LIE."

There was the sound of a galloping horse on the road ahead, and the men drew off into the darkness of the brush at the side, one alone, their leader, keeping the moonlit trail.

"Meet anyone?" this leader asked as the horseman drew up before him.

"Man and a girl, back the road a ways."

"Know the man?"

"Boss Biddle, I think. Anything wrong?"

The leader gave a low whistle. "And a girl?" he echoed.

The horseman looked at him in wonder, then rode on. The men came back into the moonlight.

"Did you hear what he said?" the leader asked them.

"Looks like the girl story's right," one suggested.

"He ain't on to us at all," said another. "We'll wait for him and take him as he comes along back."

A suggestion that it might be just as well to make sure that the man down the road with the girl was the one they wanted before they waited for him sent them ahead again. But the progress was no longer a chase; they felt sure of their victim; they were stalking their game now and they moved cautiously, though a powdered dust lay thick on the road and a footfall made no noise. In and out, back and forth around the dark and wooded canons of the hills wound the trail, bright as day in the white moonlight on this side of the gulch, black as night in the shadow of the hill across the way. Something, more curious than revengeful, was stealing over them, and, though Lynch still moved at their head and murder was in their hearts, though they believed not at all that there was a girl for whom Boss was to sacrifice his life, they nevertheless wondered; and curiosity played with their thoughts.

So they came down out of the mountains into the valley of the Big Basin, following the road to Boulder.

Half a mile this side of the town the highway skirts a thick grove of madrona, then drops in a sweeping curve into green fields of alfalfa. From the edge of the grove the road through the fields is visible almost to the settlement. It lay white and still this night like a bended bow on the earth. The men stood in the shadow of the trees and gazed down upon it, searching its length for signs of life. So bright and white was the moonlight over all the land that the two figures coming slowly along its dusty way were at first invisible to them. But as the figures climbed the hill they took shape, and the men, waiting, drew back into the blackness of the madronas.

Now and again as the figures stopped they seemed to fade away, to blend with earth and sky in the mellow haze of light. To the very edge of the trees they came, a man and a girl plainly enough now, and there stopped to look back over the fields and down upon Boulder.

He was big and towered above her. As he spoke he leaned towards her and his voice was very earnest. They were evidently in some serious discussion, and his first word implied a question asked which as yet she had not answered.

"Well?" he said, and there was something infinitely strong and true in the man's voice. But still the girl did not answer. She was looking out over the shimmering valley as though she had not heard or was not yet ready. He took her hand.

"Do you think I do not love you?" he asked.

She shook her head slowly. "I know you love me, Boss," she said, "but, Boss, oh Boss, I am afraid. I am afraid." She caught hold of his arms and held him away at the full length of her own. "I know you love me, I know that; and, Boss, I love you too; but still I am afraid—afraid of you. I am afraid of what you are,—what you seem, not what you are really,—not what you are to me." He pushed her arms away and would have caught her to him, but she drew back. "I am afraid of what they say you are, of what you might be even to me, if you did not love me always,—if—if—if I did not do, always, what you liked,—if you ever got angry with me. Why, Boss, do you know what they are saying in Boulder now?" she drew farther away, afraid to speak the words. "That you killed Jim Griffeth. That you struck him and threw him on the rocks. That he didn't fall down the dumps, but that you killed him—you, Boss, you—and threw him there. But it isn't so, it isn't so, Boss, it isn't so, I know it isn't so."

It was a rush of words and there was a passion of protest in her voice against the thing she said, but there was a fear too.

Boss looked at the girl in amazement. Stunned, incredulous, he jumped back, an oath half uttered on his lips, and a terrible anger swept over him.

"What! What are you saying, girl?" he cried. "I killed Griffith? That I killed him?"

For one moment she saw Boss as the men at the mill knew him, the man they hated, the Boss that even now they waited, not a hundred feet away, to lynch—but it was only for a moment. The anger passed. Boss gave a great laugh, a roar that awoke the echoes; and the other Boss, her Boss, was back, holding her in his arms.

"It's all a lie, little girl," he said, "I never killed Griffith, I never laid a finger on him in my life. It's a lie they have started to do me. Who said it? Why, I did not even see him the night he was killed. Wasn't I here with you? You know it's a lie. You do not believe it?" He said the last words looking earnestly into her face, and then, fearing, doubting, for a moment, her belief in him, he drew himself up to his great height and raised his arms to heaven over her.

"Before God, little girl, as I love you, all of that is a lie. They hate me at the mill because I am their boss, and because they hate me they say that against me. I believe they would even kill me if they could. But you, you are different, you do not hate me,"—she gave a little cry of protest,—"you do not hate me, you must not believe what they say,—not that, not that." He took her head in his hands and turned her face up to his own. His voice was low and gentle. "You must not believe it because it is not so. What I am to you now, little girl, I will be to you always, because I will always love you; you must not be afraid."

The men in the madronas heard no answer, but they saw the two walk on by the dark grove for some distance, then turn and come slowly back along the shadow-flecked road. Boss's arm was about the girl and her head rested close against him as they passed. By the edge of the wood, where they had stood before, they stopped again, and she laughed softly.

"I shall never be afraid now," she said, "with you."

And Boss's voice, heavy and deep, was the caress of a lover.

The men who watched so stealthily their coming but a short time before saw them go away down the road, through the moonlit fields, back to Boulder,—watched and wondered.

At last the leader shook himself from the spell of the moonlight which seemed over them all and turned back towards Nightmare.

"Boys," he said, "guess there must be another side to Boss."

Billiards by Telegraph

"IN my business," said a telegraph operator, "a man has many strange experiences. Only recently I sent a message over the wires to a well-known hotel at a seaside resort for a newly married couple. It read: 'Book room for self and wife. Ten days.' The answer came back: 'We don't take dogs.' And, of course, the couple were horrified. Later on, the explanation came. My message, it seems, had been incorrectly transmitted as 'Hold room for self and wife. Ten dogs.'

"Two sportsmen played a game of billiards a little time ago, although separated by over three hundred miles. The two tables were divided into small numbered squares, and at the end of each shot the location of the three balls would be telegraphed to the other town, where they would be set up and tackled anew. The game lasted four days, and would have cost a mint of money, only the players used a code for telegraphing purposes."

New Use for Word

When little Walter was told to write a composition containing the word "seldom," he puzzled hard over the problem for some time. But at last he found a solution, and this is what he handed up to the teacher:

"My father owned some horses, but last week he seldom."

Famous Men Who Have Lived in Fear of Assassins

WILLIAMSON, the head of Scotland Yard, once declared that the most nerve-racking test a man could be put to was the dread of assassination. Some men who were the bravest in war and in meeting an open foe were tortured almost to the point of breaking down by the dread of secret, lurking, sudden death. During his experience at Scotland Yard it was sometimes his disagreeable duty to convey to certain personages the intimation that their lives were in danger, and to take steps to insure their safety.

At the present time, perhaps, the most interesting person whose life is in danger from the assassin is Count Witte, the great Russian statesman. The blow is dreaded from a secret source, not from the ordinary quarter from which have emanated so many Russian murders of high personages. The count is surrounded by faithful servants, who guard him wherever he goes; his rooms are searched for hidden intruders, and his food is carefully tasted for poison. The count himself laughs at all precaution, and refuses to take any for himself. Inured to dangers, he seems not to care what happens to him.

"Pah! I do my best, and will take what comes!" he exclaimed to one who expostulated with him on his rashness.

The nonchalance of Count Witte has had its counterpart in many modern statesmen, who have at times had the disagreeable experience of knowing that their lives were threatened.

DIDN'T LIKE "THE BOTHER"

Mr. Balfour, when Chief Secretary for Ireland, made himself so obnoxious to a small section of desperate conspirators that his life was in danger for several months. Scotland Yard looked after him most vigilantly. Detectives hovered around him, scoured the streets in front of him, and followed him at a distance, ready for any eventuality. He persisted in maintaining that "the bother" was quite unnecessary, and after a first protest against it seemed to dismiss all thought of it from his mind. As to giving any intimation to the detectives as to where he was going, when he would go, or what he was about, such an idea never appeared to occur to him. He would walk out of his office wrapt in deep thought, and proceed calmly through the streets, oblivious of everyone near him. A dozen desperate men might have been at his elbow, and he would not have regarded them or recognized their presence.

AWKWARD TO SHADOW.

Threats to assassinate Mr. Gladstone worried him considerably. He never, however, had the slightest fear of assassination. It was the police precautions that worried him. They made him wretched and irritable. He could never forget that there were detectives watching over him. He was most courteous and kindly to those who had that responsible duty to perform, but he could not resist the temptation to give them the slip whenever it was possible.

He used to escape from the room by a convenient private door, or—at Hawarden—by one of the windows reaching to the lawn, and go off for an hour or so's ramble by himself, free from watchers. His hat hanging on a peg in the hall was no guarantee that its owner was indoors. That hat fooled many a detective, while Gladstone was calmly walking the streets outside in a hat he had secretly smuggled in. At Hawarden he walked the detectives thin whose duty it was to keep him in sight on his rambles.

The immense nerve of Napoleon III is said to have been broken by the threats of an Italian secret revolutionary society to take his life. For years the Emperor lived, as it were, on the brink of a volcano. His life was not worth a month's purchase. Myriads of police spies brought in daily reports of plots to assassinate him, and he drove about in a specially-constructed carriage, the sides of which were secretly plated with iron. One night, as he and the Empress Eugenie were proceeding to the Opera House, a miscreant threw a bomb beneath his cariage, which exploded, scattering death and wounds all around.

The Emperor and Empress escaped miraculously, and appeared in their box at the Opera as calmly as if nothing had happened. That night, when all was still at the Tuileries, one of the attendants saw the Emperor softly gliding to the room where the Prince Imperial lay asleep. The Emperor stood beside the sleeping boy, and bent over him, while the tears coursed down his face as he looked at the child; then he slipped back to his own room as softly as he had come. From that day the terror of sudden death lay on him heavily.

A SULTAN'S FEAR.

The sovereign who is most miserable through a dread of assassination to-day is the Sultan. No one, perhaps, knows what good cause he may have for fear. People who have come face to face with him have noted the strange terror in his eyes which tells the story of how he is haunted. He appears like one gazing at some unknown horror. He does not know what stealthy thing may come upon him. Yet in actual danger he is brave enough. When his palace was shaken by an earthquake that sent the courtiers flying in all directions to escape from the walls that threatened to crush him and them, the Sultan sat calmly in his chair, and betrayed not the slightest fear—indeed, a smile lit up the dark, sombre face as he noted the fright of his companions. He was amused.

If You Had a King's Wages

BY the death of King Christian, the new King of Denmark comes suddenly into an income of £60,160 per annum. This, however, is by no means extravagant pay as compared with the grants to other rulers.

The German Emperor receives £600,000 a year—the biggest allowance made to any constitutional monarch. The King of England receives only £470,000 a year, although a separate grant of £20,000 is made to the Prince of Wales, one of £10,000 to the Princess of Wales, and another of £1800 per annum to each of the King's three daughters.

The King of Austria-Hungary figures high on the list of handsomely-paid rulers, receiving £382,202 a year. King Alfonso, boy though he is, disposes of £338,000 annually, and even little Belgium spares £132,000 a year for the glory of being a monarchy. Italy's Royal grant is £157,000. Queen Wilhelmina of Holland lives quietly on £66,666, the King of Greece struggles along on £53,000, while the King of Servia—poor fellow!—is reduced to poverty by a grant of £48,000 a year, or less than £1000 a week!

Not True Progress

TEACHING the young idea to shoot is not altogether an encouraging occupation. It is so difficult to always be sure whether real progress is being made or not; and Miss Smithers, little Gladys' nursery governess, discovered this on the first day of her engagement.

She was teaching her charge spelling, and used a pictorial primer, in which each word was accompanied by an illustration.

"C-o-w, cow; b-o-w, bow," spelt Gladys obediently, in answer to the demand. And Miss Smithers thought her progress extremely rapid—a little too rapid, in fact.

She placed her hand over the picture.

"Gladys," she said, "what does c-o-w spell?"

"Cow!" said Gladys promptly.

"How do you know, my dear?"

Gladys was as honest as the day itself.

"Seed his tail!" she responded.

Poor Memory

THERE is no doubt that the tying of a piece of string round the finger is a really good aid to poor memory; but there is a well authenticated case of a man who tied a piece of cotton around his finger in the morning to remind him to get his hair cut. On the way home to dinner that evening he noticed the piece of cotton.

"Ah, yes, I remember!" he said. And, smiling proudly, he entered the accustomed shop, and sat down before the accustomed artist.

"Er—yes, sir?" said the artist, puzzled inquiry in his tones.

"Eh?—oh, yes; cut my hair please," commanded the absent-minded one curtly.

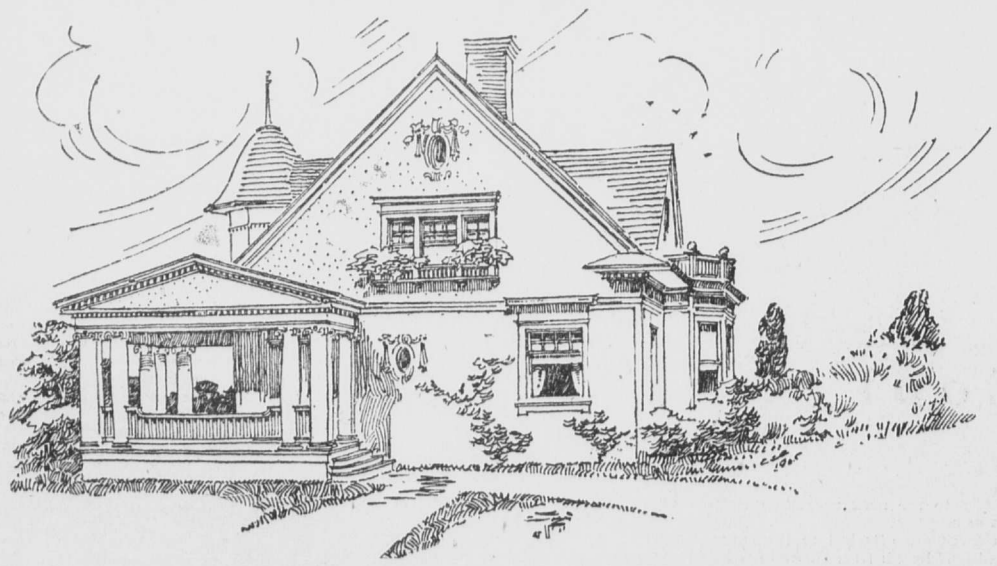
"Why certainly, sir, if you wish it," said the artist "But you won't mind my mentioning the fact that I cut it this morning, will you?"

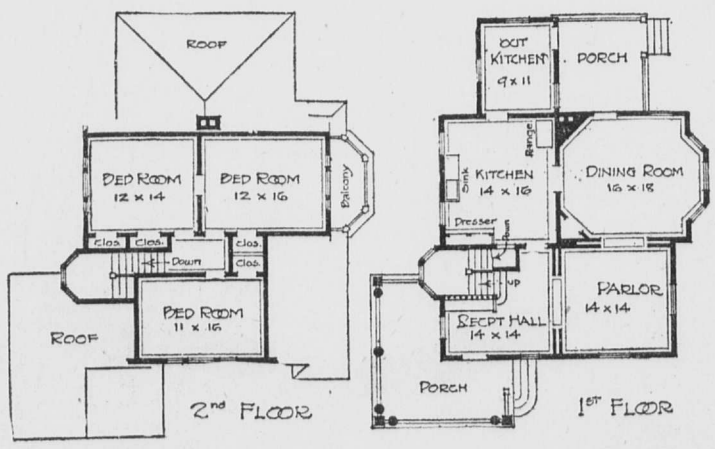
Good Cause

Proprietor: "What did you discharge that reporter for?"

Editor: "For lying. I sent him up to interview my mother-in-law, and he came back and said she wouldn't talk."

An Attractive Colonial House for $2800





THIS beautiful house is of the free colonial style. It is built of white plaster and if placed back from the road among the trees it is very picturesque. It is also possible to produce this stunning effect at a very low cost which will make it within reach of those desiring a small suburban house.

The first floor is admirably planned for comfort and convenience, all rooms being large and well lighted, insuring cheerfulness throughout. The second floor has three good sized bedrooms, well equipped with closets and well ventilated. For a reasonable additional expenditure a bath can readily be added. This attractive home can be erected at the total cost of $2795, made up of the following itemized amounts:

Digging	$75
Stone work	200
Cement floor	30
Carpentering	500
Paper and nails	25
Millwork	450
Hardware	75
Lumber	500
Painting and Glazing	250
Shingle roof	100
Plastering	300
Brickwork	100
Plumbing	50
Hot air heating	100
Range	40
Total	$2795