

Suckers By the Hundreds

Gigantic Fraud Exposed and Money Orders Intercepted by the Postal Officials.

[Leslie's Monthly for June.]

One of the most typical of the frauds carried out through the mails was one wherein the receiver of the circular was told that he was entitled to a prize which he had won from a magazine called the Mississippi Valley Planter, published by the Mississippi Valley Publishing Company.

The real kernel was the statement that the recipient of the circular was entitled to a certain prize which would be shipped on receipt of the freight charges. In nearly every case the addressee had won premium number seven. A horse and Lilly buggy and harness, valued at two hundred and seventy five dollars.

Never was a bubble blown with less actual soap. There had never been such a concern as the Mississippi Valley Publishing Company, or such a publication as the Mississippi Valley Planter.

The fraud order intercepted six hundred money orders and a number of registered letters. All these people, with the hundreds who had come before them, were reaching out after valuable prizes which they never had.

An Elastic Religion Needed.

The Rev. V. B. Carroll, a southern clergyman, tells the following story: "We were driving one Sunday from Decatur when we came upon a negro with a club in his hand and a freshly killed possum on his shoulder.

"Religion? Religion? queried the man, as he held the possum up with one hand and scratched his head with the other.

"Are you a religious man?"

"I are. I are list on my way home from church."

"And what sort of religion have you got that permits you to go hunting on Sunday?"

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a fat possum heads you off couldn't be established round here by all the preachers in the universe."

Working Night and Day.

The busiest and mightiest little thing that ever was made is Dr. King's New Life Pills. These pills change weakness into strength, listlessness into energy, brain fog into mental power.

Only \$7.50 to St. Louis and Return. From Marshalltown, via the Iowa Central Railway.

The Chicago Great Western Railway will sell round trip tickets at one fare plus \$2 to points in Canada.

Low Excursion Rates to West Baden and French Lick Springs.

Via the Northwestern Line, Excursion tickets will be sold July 22 to 25, inclusive.

Special Tourist Rates to Points in Canada.

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The Substitute

By WILL N. HARBIN, Author of "Abner Daniel," "The Land of the Changing Sun," "The North Walk Mystery," Etc.

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George Buckley threw himself into the chair at the table. There was a pause. A train passed on the track within twenty yards of the rear door of the warehouse, and the floor shook. A pistol shot was heard, followed by the yelping of a wounded dog at the other end of the street.

"George," began the merchant in a strange husky voice, "you are now meetin' the biggest trouble of yore whole life. I was jest about yore age, an' everything was about as promisin' when my trouble overtook me. George"—the old man gulped—"did you ever hear that I—killed a feller jest at the close of the war?"

Buckley stared steadily, his brows raised.

"I think—yes, I knew about it. But I didn't think you." The young man seemed unable to formulate his thoughts into words.

"Yes, I was acquitted, but how—ah, how? You wonder why you was selected to go through yore present trial, an' I've wondered many an' many a time why mine was put on me.

"I'm sorter scared at the sound of my own voice," said Hillyer. "It's like somebody else was a-tellin' about it. I ain't even whispered it to myself. An' in all my prayers in regard to it I never have spoke his name ur the name of the crime. I always said, 'You know what I mean, Lord. Show me how to unload it.' Well"—Hillyer swallowed—"he fell dead in his tracks. I was sober in a second. I heard Williams smokin' pistol an' my deed he give a little cry an' started to break an' run, but I throwed the revolver down an' called to 'im an' begged 'im not to shoot. Then I stood in a hoos stall while he went an' examined—the body. I couldn't tell it. Then he come back to me an' told me Lynn Hambright was a corpse. That was a pile of dirty hay in the stall, an' I remember I jest fell on it, face downward, an' begun to cry an' beg the Lord to save me.

"Williams had a heart like a child's. He stood that an' watched an' listened to my ravins of fear an' regret till all at once he begun tryin' to pacify me. He told me I'd come clear; that it was in self defense; that he had seen it all an' would go on the stand an' testify in my behalf. I know now—in fact, I knowed when I heard him on the stand—that he was lyin' to save my neck.

but I wanted to escape the penalty an' couldn't 'a' stopped 'im. The fear of meetin' my God was awful. I wasn't even jailed. It was in unsettled times just after the war. My folks was prominent, an' public sympathy fer me, young as I was, was high. The hardest thing of all to bear was the grief of Hambright's mother. It looked like it wd mighty nigh kill 'er. He was her youngest an' pet. Her other boys never amounted to anything an' had gone west an' left 'er. Finally I come clear in the eyes of the world, but, as God knows, not in my own. That crime is before me, wakkin' or sleepin'. I often dream that I never done it, an' daylight gives that the lie. Seemed like ever' thing I went into turned out money, an' I prospered, though I did all I could to alleviate suffering an' help the different churches. Mrs. Hambright jest had a little farm over in the mountains that turned out a bare livin', an' I sent a friend to 'er to offer her hoos, but she indignantly refused it. She'd come in town once in awhile, but she'd never come nigh whar I was at. Then I heard she was tryin' to get a pension through congress. Her husband had claimed to be a Union man, an' that he was forced into the Confederate ranks, whar he fit an' was killed, an' somebody told 'er she was entitled to a pension. Old Trabee tuck up the claim an' writ on about it to Washington, an' one day he happened to tell me that he had had a final decision an' that she couldn't get it at all. That he had to have to tell 'er the outcome. Then I got him to pretend to her hoos, but the pension was allowed, an' I paid the \$15 a month. I've been doin' it fer twenty year now, an' it has kept 'er from sufferin', but I'm in mortal dread of her findin' out whar the money comes from an' sellin' her place to repay it. She's still in good health over thar in the mountains.

About once a year, generally in the fall, she comes in town, but she shirks meetin' me. Somehow I always breathe freer when she's gone out o' town. The sight of 'er fetches it all back wthin what she thinks about it now, but she never mentions the subject to a soul. I've suffered the torments of the damned. I made a public confession in court, as well as I could, to show my contrit, without implicatin' Hank Williams, but it didn't do a speck o' good. All the members swarmed round me an' patted me on the back an' said I was nigh the throne, but their pats jest seemed to beat my guilt deeper in. I was afraid of the slightest sound at night or my shadow in daylight an' was always countin' on beln' tuck off by disease. One mornin', in shavin', I noticed a little red spot on my cheek an' tuck it fer a cancer. I was shore then that the Lord intended to make me die a slow, loathsome death, an' all at once I felt weak at the knees an' couldn't hardly stand. My

eyes came an' found me. I didn't tell her about my cancer, an' she thought I was jest sick from someth' I'd eat, an' when the doctor come I was afraid to tell 'im about the sore place. He left some medicine, an' I made out like I tuck it, but I throwed it away. After that I'd make a point to stop an' talk to 'im every day to see ef he'd notice my face an' speak of it, but he didn't. I've started up to his office fifty times an' backed out, jest becaus I couldn't bear to be told that it was a cancer. Howsomever, one day, when it was more inflamed than ever, I went to his office—as weak as a sick kitten, feelin' jest like a man goin' to the scaffold. I went in an' set down an' waited fer 'im to get through with somebody else, an' when he turned to me I said, 'Doc, I want you to take a look at my face.' He put on his specks an' examined it; then he laughed an' said: 'I'll bet a dollar you thought it was a cancer. Folks nowadays is more anxious to raise cancers 'an they are good taters.' 'But ain't it?' I axed 'im. 'No,' said he, 'it ain't nothin' of the sort. Ef you'll tuck rubbin' it every minute in the day an' stop thinkin' about it, it'll go away in a week.' I felt as light as a feather when I left him, but it wasn't twenty-four hours 'fore I had some other ailment.

"I was always lookin' fer the Lord to show designs agin me. Fer one thing, no children come to me. Mr. Mar, an' I interpreted that as meanin' that, since I'd put life out of the world, I shouldn't fetch it in. Most married folks worry when they ain't got some offspring, but it worried me powerful. I never seed a happy child or a proud mother an' father without feelin' the Lord's rebuke. Oh, George, George, I've led the most awful life that was ever led by a human bein', it seems to me—an' I kept it all to myself, smilin' along with the rest, an' tryin' to find some loophole of escape. Now here's whar you come in, an' you'll think it odd, but I've started in to explain in full, an' I'm goin' to do it. You know I used to pass yore pa's place pretty often, goin' to my river mill an' farm an' at the mill I frequently seed you comin' on that rickety old mare, a straddle of yore bag o' shelled corn, barefooted even in winter, with yore hands an' feet cracked with the cold. It was common report about how bad you was treated by yore daddy, an' what a awful character he had. May-be you remember the talk me 'n' you had, an' how you told me how anxious you was to get schoolin' an' books. That was the first day after my crime that I got a beam of spiritual light. It come all over me like a flash that ef I could take you out'n yore degradation an' raise you to a respectable, useful place in life I could atone in part for what I'd done. Do you remember that day, George?"

George Buckley started, raised his eyes from the floor in a sharp stare at

the haggard face before him and said: "Yes, sir, I remember that day."

"Well, I couldn't git away from the fact. As I say, it was the first bit of light I'd had. The following winter you remember my proposal. Somehow I was even then afraid you'd refuse, but you went off to school. An' then the weight and bitterness of my heart seemed to lessen, for every report I had was glorious. You stood head; you made the best speeches; you had the most friends among teachers an' pupils. Oh, George, George, you don't know what it meant to me; you seemed to be totin' me out of a rushin' river—a river rushin' toward hell. Then you know about the job I givin' you laid up for me, gradely invested was proof to me that God had heard my long prayer an' was answerin' it in his own way. I was puttin' into life a man for one I had tuck out. Only one hitch occurred, an' that was when they threatened yore pa with arrest fer pennin' up them hoos. Then you got desperate an' started in to drinkin'. But we squashed that, an' it went on smooth again till this—this late matter. And now—oh, George, I'm afraid—I'm afraid the Lord or the devil, or both combined, have been leadin' me through all this road of promise jest to order to let me fall the last year. I've come here tonight to pray to you—yes, to you—to save me. If you go down, I do too. Now you see what it all meant an' what it means to me. I'm in yore hands, my boy. As God's agent, you hold me in the palm of yore hand."

The old man's voice broke. He made an effort to say something more, but choked up, and, with his gaze on the ragged rug in front of him, he sat quite motionless except for his heaving shoulders. George Buckley bent forward, his hands tightly clasping each other. Without a word he rose and went with a steady step out into the darkness of the warehouse. Hillyer heard his crunching tread as he walked back and forth over the grain ed bed and he knelt beside the bed and tried to pray the prayer that had rung in his old brain for thirty years, but somehow the worn words refused to come. George Buckley's silence was against him. His long de-layed doom lurked in the dark silence of the great house, and in a moment George Buckley would calmly bring it forth and show it to him. Suddenly from the darkness he heard a stifled cry as of pain; then a heavy weight went down—George Buckley had fallen. A cold sweat broke out on the merchant's face. He feared he knew not what, but he feared. Was his doom about to show itself in a more tragic shape than he had ever dreamed of? He stood up and slowly crept rather than walked to the door of the room. Standing there, he found his voice and cried out: "George, are you hurt?" His voice rang harshly through the

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