THE GENTLE GRAFTER—By O. HENRY

CONSCIENCE IN ART

"I NEVER could hold my partner Andy Tucker down to the legitimate ethics of pure swindling," said Jeff Peters to me one day.

"Andy had too much imagination to be honest. He used to devise schemes of money getting so fraudulent and high financial that they wouldn't have been allowed in the bylaws of a railroad rebate system.

"Myself, I never believed in taking any man's dollars unless I gave him something for it—something in the way of rolled gold jewelry, garden seeds, lumbago lotion, stock certificates, stove polish or a crack on the head to show for his money. I guess I must have had New England ancestors away back and inherited some of their stanch and rugged fear of the police.

"But Andy's family tree was in different kind. I don't think he could have traced his descent any further back than a corporation.

"One summer while we was in the middle west working down the Ohio valley with a line of family albums, headache powders and roach destroyer, Andy takes one of his notions of high and actionable financiering.

"'Jeff,' says he, 'I've been thinking that we ought to drop these rutabaga fanciers and give our attention to something more nourishing and prolific. If we keep on snapshooting these hinds for their egg money we'll be classed as nature fakers. How about plunging into the fastnesses of the skyscraper country and biting some big bull caribous in the chest?'

"'Well,' says I, 'you know my idiosyncrasies. I prefer a strong, nonillegal style of business such as we are carrying on now. When I take money I want to leave some tangible object in the other fellow's hands for him to gaze at and to distract his attention from my spoor, even if it's only a Komical Kuss Trick Finger Ring or Squirting Perfume in a Friend's Eye. But if you've got a fresh idea,' says I, 'let's have a look at it. I'm not so wedded to petty graft that I would refuse something better in the way of a subsidy.'

"'I was thinking,' says Andy, 'of a little hunt without horn, hound or camera among the great herd of the Midas Americanus, commonly known as the Pittsburg millionaire.'

"'In New York?' I asks.

"'No, sir,' says Andy, 'in Pittsburg. That's their habitat. They don't like New York. They go there now and then just because it's expected of then because it's expected of 'em.

"'A Pittsburg millionaire in New York is like a fly in a cup of hot coffee—he attracts attention and comment, but he don't enjoy it. New York ridicules him for "blowing" so much money in that town of sneaks and snobs, and sneers. The truth is, he don't spend anything while he is there. I saw a memorandum of expenses for a 10 days' trip to Bunkum town made by a Pittsburg man worth $15,000,000 once. Here's the way he set it down:

Railroad fare to and from.....	$ 21
Cab fare to and from hotel.....	2
Hotel bill at $5 per day.....	50
Tips	5,750
Total	$5,823

"'That's the voice of New York,' goes on Andy. 'The town's nothing but a head waiter. If you tip it too much it'll go and stand by the door and make fun of you to the hat check boy. When a Pittsburger wants to spend money and have a good time he stays at home. That's where we'll go to catch him.'

"RUMPLED MY HAIR UP"

"Well, to make a dense story more condensed, me and Andy cached our paris green and antipyrine powders and albums in a friend's cellar and took the trail to Pittsburg. Andy didn't have any especial prospectus of chicanery and violence drawn up, but he always had plenty of confidence that his immoral nature would rise to any occasion that presented itself.

"As a concession to my ideas of self-preservation and rectitude he promised that if I should take an active and incriminating part in any little business venture that we might work up there should be something actual and cognizant to the senses of touch, sight, taste or smell to transfer to the victim for the money so my conscience might rest easy. After that I felt better and entered more cheerfully into the foul play.

"'Andy,' says I, as we strayed through the smoke along the cinder-path they call Smithfield street, 'had you figured out how we are going to get acquainted with these coke kings and pigiron squeezes? Not that I would decry my own worth of system of drawing room deportment and work with the olive fork and pie knife,' says I, 'but isn't the entree nous into the salons of the stogie smokers going to be harder than you imagined?'

"'If there's any handicap at all,' says Andy, 'it's our own refinement and inherent culture. Pittsburg millionaires are a fine body of plain, wholehearted, unassuming, democratic men.

"'They are rough but uncivil in their manners, and though their ways are boisterous and unpolished, under it all they have a great deal of unpoliteness and discourtesy. Nearly every one of 'em rose from obscurity,' says Andy, 'and they'll live in it till the town gets to using smoke consumers. If we act simple and unaffected and don't go too far from the saloons and keep making a noise like an import duty on steel rails we won't have any trouble in meeting some of 'em socially.'

"Well, Andy and me drifted about town three or four days getting our bearings. We got to know several millionaires by sight.

"One used to stop his automobile in front of our hotel and have a quart of champagne brought out to him. When the waiter opened it he'd turn it up to his mouth and drink it out of the bottle. He used to be a glass blower before he made his money.

"One evening Andy failed to come to the hotel for dinner. About 11 o'clock he came into my room.

"'Landed one, Jeff,' says he; '12 millions. Oil, rolling mills, real estate and natural gas. He's a fine man; no airs about him. Made all his money in the last five years. He's got professors posting him up now in education—art and literature and haberdashery and such things.

"'When I saw him he'd just won a bet of $10,000 with a steel corporation man that there'd be four suicides in the Allegheny rolling mills today. So everybody in sight had to walk up and have drinks on him. He took a fancy to me and asked me to dinner with him. We went to a restaurant in Diamond alley and sat on stools and had sparkling Moselle and crab chowder and apple fritters.

"'Then he wanted to show me his bachelor apartment in Liberty street. He's got 10 rooms over a fish market with privilege of the bath on the floor above. He told me it cost him $18,000 to furnish his apartment, and I believe it.

"'He's got $40,000 worth of pictures in one room, and $20,000 worth of curios and antiques in another. His name's Scudder, and he's 45, and taking lessons on the piano and 15,000 barrels of oil a day out of his wells.'

"'All right,' says I. 'Preliminary canter satisfactory. But, kay vooly, voo? What good is the art junk to us? And the oil?'

"'Now, that man,' says Andy, sitting thoughtfully on the bed, 'ain't what you would call an ordinary scutt. When he was showing me his cabinet of art curios his face lighted up like the door of a coke oven. He says if some of his big deals go through he'll make J. P. Morgan's collection of sweatshop tapestry and Augusta (Me.) beadwork look like the contents of an ostrich's craw thrown on a screen by a magic lantern.

"'And he showed me a little carving,' went on Andy, 'that anybody could see was a wonderful thing. It was something like 2,000 years old, he said. It was a lotus flower with a woman's face in it carved out of a solid piece of ivory.

"'Scudder looks it up in a catalogue and describes it. An Egyptian carver named Khafra made two of 'em for King Ramese II about the year B. C. The other one can't be found. The junkshops and antique bugs have rubbered all Europe for it, but it seems to be out of stock. Scudder paid $2,000 for the one he has.'

"'Oh, well,' says I, 'this sounds like the purling of a rill to me. I thought we came here to teach the millionaires business, instead of learning art from 'em.'

"'Be patient,' says Andy, kindly. 'Maybe we will see a rift in the smoke ere long.'

"All the next morning Andy was out. I didn't see him till about noon. He came to the hotel and called me into his room across the hall. He pulled a roundish bundle about as big as a goose egg out of his pocket and unwrapped it. It was an ivory carving just as he had described the millionaire's to me.

"'I went in an old second hand store and pawnshop a while ago,' says Andy, 'and I see this half hidden under a lot of old daggers and truck. The pawnbroker said he'd had it for several years and thinks it was soaked by some Arabs or Turks or some foreign dubs that used to live down by the river.

"'I offered him $2 for it, and I must have looked like I wanted it, for he said it would be taking the pumpernickle out of his children's mouths to hold any conversation that did not lead up to a price of $35. I finally got it for $25.

"'Jeff,' goes on Andy, 'this is the exact counterpart of Scudder's carving. It's absolutely a dead ringer for it. He'll pay $2,000 for it as quick as he'd tuck a napkin under his chin. And why shouldn't it be the genuine other one, anyhow, that the old gipsy whittled out?'

"'Why not, indeed?' says I. 'And how shall we go about compelling him to make a voluntary purchase of it?'

"Andy had his plan all ready, and I'll tell you how we carried it out.

"I got a pair of blue spectacles, put on my black frock coat, rumpled my hair up and became Professor Pickleman. I went to another hotel, registered and sent a telegram to Scudder to come and see me at once on important art business. The elevator dumped him in on me in less than an hour. He was a foggy man with a clarion voice, smelling of Connecticut whappers and naphtha.

"'Hello, Profess!' he shouts. 'How's your conduct?'

"I rumpled my hair some more and gave him a blue glass stare.

"'Sir,' says I. 'Are you Cornelius T. Scudder? Of Pittsburg? Pennsylvania?'

"'I am,' says he. 'Come out and have a drink.'

"'I have neither the time nor the desire,' says I, 'for such harmful and deleterious amusements. I have come from New York,' says I, 'on a matter of busi—on a matter of art.

"'I learned there that you are the owner of an Egyptian ivory carving of the time of Rameses II, representing the head of Queen Isis in a lotus flower. There were only two of such carvings made. One has been lost for many years. I recently discovered and purchased the other in a pawn—in an obscure museum in Vienna.

"'I wish to purchase yours. Name your price.'

"'Well, the great ice jams, Profess!' says Scudder. 'Have you found the other one? Me sell? No. I don't guess Cornelius Scudder needs to sell anything that he wants to keep. Have you got the carving with you, Profess?'

"I shows it to Scudder. He examines it carefully all over.

"'It's the article,' says he. 'It's a duplicate of mine, every line and curve of it. Tell you what I'll do,' he says. 'I won't sell, but I'll buy. Give you $2,500 for yours.'

"'Since you won't sell, I will,' says I. 'Large bills, please. I'm a man of few words. I must return to New York tonight. I lecture tomorrow at the aquarium.'

"Scudder sends a check down and the hotel cashes it. He goes off with his piece of antiquity and I hurry back to Andy's hotel, according to arrangement.

"Andy is walking up and down the room, looking at his watch.

"'Well?' he says.

"'Twenty-five hundred,' says I. 'Cash.'

"'We've got just 11 minutes,' says Andy, 'to catch the Baltimore and Ohio westbound. Grab your baggage.'

"'What's the hurry, says I. 'It was a square sale. And even if it was only an imitation of the original carving it'll take him some time to find it out. He seemed to be sure it was the genuine article.'

"'It was,' says Andy. 'It was his own. When I was looking at his curios yesterday he stepped out of the room for a moment and I pocketed it. Now, will you pick up your suitcase and hurry?'

"'Then,' says I, 'why was that story about finding another one in the pawn——'

"'Oh,' says Andy, 'out of respect for that conscience of yours. Come on.'"

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"I WENT IN AN OLD SECOND-HAND STORE AND PAWNSHOP"

"IT'S THE ARTICLE, SAYS HE. IT'S A DUPLICATE OF MINE"

Why Not Have Our Living Rooms Out of Doors?

EVERY woman who has been to Euprope comes home with an enthusiasm for living out of doors and for making America one great garden as England is, but she finds two obstacles in the way which seem at first to be insurmountable, says the Chicago Inter Ocean.

We can never have the four hours of twilight after the day's work, which makes it possible for everybody in England to have an outdoor hobby.

In a country where you can play tennis until 8 o'clock in the evening for six months in the year and where it is light enough to work in the garden until 10, every man, woman and child, sooner or later, knows something about gardening.

The other reason why we do not live outdoors would be ridiculous if it were not so serious—mosquitoes! They have no mosquitoes in Europe. Even in the daytime, as we walk across the lawn, we sometimes feel them about our ankles and the moment we seek relief from the sunshine and get comfortably settled under tree or arbor we are likely to hear that ominous hum which dispels all thoughts of peace and puts us at once on the defensive.

The inexorable logic of the situation points directly to the screened verandas as the first thing necessary for the enjoyment of outdoor living, and the fact that they are not universal shows how we commonly fail to get down to fundamentals and how reckless we are of human life.

For everybody knows, nowadays, that malarial fever is not caused by bad air or damp ground, as people thought for ages, but can be carried only by a particular genus of mosquitoes known as anopheles.

This simple fact is bound to revolutionize the appearance of American houses. The veranda will disappear from the front of the house, and will become a screened outdoor living room at the back or side. The folly of having a veranda that faces the street is now apparent. Farmers may be excused for wishing to see the passersby, but city people need to be protected from city sights and sounds during their resting hours.

The absurd balconies which have so long made American domestic architecture ridiculous will give way to outdoor sleeping rooms, and 25 years from now the American will be as famous for his habit of outdoor sleeping as the Englishman for his "bath."

Outdoor sleeping is one of the greatest luxuries of life. The sensation of waking up to find yourself in a garden is preferable to all the products of a garden.

And it is a surprising fact that the winter is more enjoyable than the summer! Contrary to everybody's first impression there is not the slightest "heroism" about it. Nobody ever has to harden himself gradually to it. You are just as warm indoors with your down comforters and your union suit of rough flannel, and your hood, which ties as snugly around the face as you desire.

The notion that outdoor sleeping is only for sick people is harbored by those who are grossly ignorant. The most important part of outdoor living for the city dweller is the outdoor living at night, because that is the time when the body is rebuilt, whereas the daytime processes are destructive. The more oxygen one gets at night the more constructive work is done and the more vigor and fullness of life one enjoys on the next day.

I should like to explain how to transform a veranda or balcony into an outdoor living room for $25; to secure outdoor privacy, even in the most crowded part of a city; how to get shelter from rain, drafts and heavy winds; how to combine a veranda for day use (including outdoor meals) with a balcony for night use; how to train vines so as to get the most enchanting outlook toward the garden and how to have humming birds come up within three feet of you every day.

I should further like to explain how to have all these things at the back of the house and still be free from kitchen sounds and odors, from the sight of domestic refuse; how to have screens that can be taken down after the mosquitoes are gone and how to make them last for many years; and how to have a hanging couch that will be more comfortable and beautiful than rocking chairs or hammocks or swings and will be entirely free from the objections that are commonly made to hanging couches.

But I am guiltily conscious I am expected to speak of Italian well curbs, fountains, marble seats, Japanese store lanterns, pleached alleys and gazebos. Also a trifling fact that these cannot be secured for $25 is no excuse for entertaining attention under false pretenses—even for fundamentals.

The first thing a woman does when a garden is a delightful possibility is to make out a list of roses; the last thing a person thinks of is to make a plan.

The first thing a beginner thinks of, when the inspiration comes to transform a mere garden into an outdoor living room is to have a sun dial and a pergola. Yet, clearly, health comes before beauty, and is it not better to spend $25 on screening a veranda than on a summer house?

What kind of a summer house can you built for $25? And if you put it in the center of your garden, will it enable you to enjoy the garden in the evening? Not at all, for it will not be screened. Even if you did screen it, it would be out of harmony with the spirit of the garden.

The conclusion is irresistible that the best way to spend $25 or less on "garden furniture" is to screen a veranda or balcony that faces the garden.

Assuming that you already have your heart's desire in this respect, what can be done to make the garden more livable? The answer is brief, and, I hope, satisfactory. You can have one of four things—a little summer house, a little arbor (or pergola), a plain seat, or a little drinking fountain for the birds.

Your heart's craving for a sundial will have to be stifled. It is impossible to get one set pedestal and all that will be permanent, and beautiful and reasonably accurate for $25.

If the dial itself cost $13 or less it will either be accurate and ugly or else it will be nearly half an hour out of the way a good part of the year.

Of the four practicable things the summer house is the ideal, because it is the only one that gives protection from the rain; and, therefore, gives the freest opportunity for children's games and mother's naps.

Has any one ever lived who did not enjoy sitting in a waterproof summer house during a gentle shower? Such coziness, such satisfaction in watching the grateful earth drink its fill, such raindrops on the petals, such a soft, misty atmosphere, such silence audible, and, finally, such rainbows, such a chorus of bird song and such perfumes!

One's letters of friendship should be written in a garden. The summer house is the only place outdoors where you can safely stow away pen, ink and paper, books worth reading and children's playthings. It is less practical for outdoor dining than the veranda because farther away from the kitchen, but it is an admirable place for taking tea.

A more poetic place is the arbor or pergola, because you see the vines directly overhead and get glimpses of the blue sky beyond. Also you get a more delicious play of light and shade. Both arbor and pergola protect you from sun, but not from rain.

The only difference between them is that an arbor has latticed sides, while a pergola has not. Also "pergola" is an Italian word which enables a contractor to charge more money. The man who wants to do this to you always accents the word on the second syllable. Both pergola and arbor were originally designed to support grapes.

It is hardly possible to build a summer house, arbor or pergola for $25 of finished lumber and on classical lines. Rustic work is about the only practicable thing, and even then you will probably have to furnish the plans and labor.

Nevertheless, it is said that a good old fashioned grape arbor can still be built for $25. This is the kind with an elliptical roof and the specifications are as follows:

Uprights, 4x4; lateral beams or plates, 4x6; lateral strips on top, 2x7-8; elliptical sides or rafters of 1 1-4 inch stocks; side cross lattice of ½ inch stock. This construction costs $2 a running foot.

If you decide on finished lumber protect it against the weather by puttying all joints and covering the whole with a white lead and a linseed oil paint.

If you decide on rustic work, you should make absolutely sure that your red cedar has been cut in the fall when the sap has ceased to run. Otherwise the bark will peal off in a year or two.

To prevent unsightly rust spots, drive all the nails well in.

For the flooring of a summer house use finished boards instead of rough poles. They will be cheaper to lay and pleasanter to tread on. And be sure to have the floor six inches or so above the ground.

If you cannot afford these things, have a seat of the same kind. This, too, will probably have to be rustic, for a four foot bench of cypress, with no back, costs $12. And who can take comfort in a garden seat without a back?

The things that add most to the real happiness of life often cost the least. What would be pleasanter than to have the companionship of the birds both summer and winter? Yet all one has to do is to scatter crumbs in the winter and set out a pan of water in the summer.

A lady who has written one of the most popular and useful books on birds has a drinking fountain for birds which did not cost a cent. It is simply the iron base of an old umbrella stand. She fills it faithfully and is rewarded by seeing perhaps fifty kinds of birds, which the rest of us never see at all.