

## A BUNDLE OF TRACTS

By DR. KNOX CALDWELL

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"Look here, Wells," rasped the managing editor, wheeling about in his easy chair and surveying me sternly, "your work is getting rotten, absolutely rotten. What you need is a vacation. Take it. Get out and don't show your face around here for two weeks."

Thus it came about that the next day found me loitering comfortably on a settee, in a shady part of the park. My five years' work on the newspaper had given me a wide acquaintanceship within the city. Consequently, among the passers-by, there were many whose faces were familiar.

Presently two familiar figures came within my field of vision. They were a pair of girls whom I had encountered many times in my search for news, named respectively "Mag" and "Liz."

Being a trifle familiar with their especial brand of "graft," I decided to watch and see with what success they should operate it. So I lit my pipe and waited expectantly, nor did I have long to wait.

Suddenly there came a wild shriek and, in a moment, people were rushing pell mell toward the spot where a moment ago I had sighted this gifted pair.

I smiled sardonically and sat still, for I had seen the little play and its inevitable denouement enacted many times. "Mag," the smaller one, had just keeled over in a fair imitation of an epileptic fit while her sister "Liz" lent her aid by wringing her hands and proclaiming in heartrending accents, "O, me sister. She's dyin'. She's dyin'!"

Of course the whole exhibition would not take over five minutes and, as a finale, some sympathetic bystander would pass around the hat for the afflicted one. I yawned, as the little circle disintegrated, and wondered whether I ought to report "Liz" and her confrere to the police or give her a dime and ask for a story. Fate decided the question for me.

The crowd had miraculously disappeared, having evidently forgotten "Mag" and her troubles, while the precious pair wandered slowly along in my direction, keeping a shifty eye out meanwhile for a possible policeman.

I pulled my hat down over my eyes and pretended to sleep. Presently I was rewarded by a whining voice. "Please, mister, help a poor girl that's got fits."

I sat up and pushed back my hat. "Why, hello, Liz," I said casually, "at the old game I see. Why don't you try something new?"

The girl, in whose hard and careworn face there was not a trace of fear, stared at me defiantly. "Wot if we is?" she said sullenly, "folks like us has got to live some way and the old game is the best anyhow. I tried a new one las' week, and it was all to the bum." Here she stopped and looked at me suspiciously.

"Go on Liz," said I good naturedly, "I'm not working this week and I'll give my word of honor not to peach on you. Sit down and tell me about it."

The hunted look left the girl's face and she glanced at me gratefully as she sat down.

"Thanks, Mr. Wells," she said, "I taut you wan't no piker. Well, it was like dis. Some o' de fly cops got wise to our game an' dey told us to quit it or get plinched, so we quit an' kep' in de house for a while. T'ings to eat got kinder scarce aroun' th' joint so, one night, I says to Mag 'I'm goin' to duck out an' see what's doin' an' I took a hike down to the Bow'ry."

"I wuz sneakin' along when, all of a sudden, I runs into 'Marble Mary' just out from a 'free months' trip to th' island. Mary she hooks into me an', w'en I tells her me bad luck, she puts me wise to a new lay that she says is a peach an' a winner. On de way home I lays me plans to try it out nex' day. Now dis is a kind of a particular job so I calls on all me frien's fer help."

"One lends me a swell lid she's swiped somewhere, another hands me a dress fer Mag an' finally, we're bot' fixed up like duchesses and ready fer parade."

"Den I gets out a new shiny hand bag, dat I copped from somebody or other, and I packs it full o' paper until it looked like th' property of Mrs. Van Astor."

"Wid dat in me mitt, me and Mag hits de pike fer down town. We wuzn't aimin' fer no cheap joint, neither, but fer Wanacooper's, th' sweetest place in town. Course, we didn't know w'ether we could get in or not, but a faint heart ain't productive of anything to eat an' anyhow we couldn't do no more than get trowed out."

"Well, luck was wid us, fer dey was a big sale goin' on an' th' bubbles an' carriages was lined up fer half a mile, an' swells goin' in an' out like bees in a hive. Me an' Mag 'waited a bit an' then slid in wid th' mob and nobody said a word."

"We wandered around a while, keepin' an eye open fer the store cop, and finally I spots me meat—a big fat woman wid her hands covered wid sparklers an' a juicy lookin' grip in her hand that I figgered ought to be good fer a couple of hundred anyway."

"The fat one she wandered around and around, wid me and Mag on de trail, lookin' careless but jest a waitin' fer a chance to get busy wid th' valise. Finally, she stops at the glove counter an' sets down to look 'em over."

"I gives Mag th' an' den I slides in aside her and plunks me hand caged down by hers. Say, but she trowed me a frosty face, and it was all I could do to keep from laughin', I felt so good."

"Says I to the pink complected doll behin' the counter, 'show me some 50 cent mitts please' and, jest as she was tolnin' Mag got busy and trun a fit."

"Well say, my fat frien' she jest give one screech an' turned aroun' to see what was goin' on. While she and everyone else was rubberin' I grabbed her cash box, leavin' mine there in place of it, an' walked away, Mag was still a hollerin' an' so was ev'rybody else as near as I could make out. People was a runnin' ev'ry which way an', in the rumpus, I jest kep' a walkin' an' a walkin', and pretty soon I walked out the door with Mrs. Van Fatty-blik's grip in my hand an' my old carpet sack of brown paper a layin' back there on th' counter beside 'er."

"Gee, I said to myself, 'this is too easy. If this keeps up I'll be a swell myself soon' an' I hugged that fat valise just like it was a baby."

"Well, I walked kind o' slow to th' corner, but after that you bet I went some, a swearin' for joy at ev'ry step an' a wonderin' how many piannys I'd get wid th' boodles an' swell togs and odder tings."

"W'en I reached de dump where we hangs out I sneaked up stairs into th' room, buttoned th' door tight an' den I set there, a lookin', lovin' like, at that grip an' my mouth jest a waterin'. My! how tickled I was!"

"I was jest gettin' ready to bust it open an' feast my eyes, when Mag came up th' stairs, lickety-split. Well we clinches an' laughs an' den cries an', finally, we goes after th' boodle."

"I opened it up very cautious, so dat none of th' diamonds can roll out onto th' floor, an' say, you can't guess wot was in it. Money? No, Jew'ry? Nit. Gold, bonds an' diamonds? Not on your picture. Say! there wasn't nothin' in that lyin' deceitful 20 dollar carpet bag but a big bundle of tracks. You know what tracks is—them things th' W. C. T. U. and th' Y. M. C. A. gives to us poor heathens instead of a sandwich an' a cup o' coffee."

"I pulled out a bunch and looks at 'em. 'Wat kind o' a life are you livin' an' 'Lyn' is the root of all evil,' an' more like that. I handed a fever out to Mag, in case she should feel neglected, and went on."

"Way down at th' bottom was two copper pennies an' a postage stamp that had been used. That was all. I see at once dat Mrs. Van Astor had only been out shoppin' an' dat we had made a mistake in pickin' her out as an easy mark. She was a wise gasabe all right an' we was the marks."

"Well, I looked at Mag an' Mag looked at me an' neither of us said a word. T'en I takes all dem valubles, tracks, pennies an' all, an' I puts 'em back in th' valise. After that I opens a winder an' I heaves it out an' I only hopes whoever foun' it got more joy out of it than I did."

"I never come so near bein' rich in my life, all right, but heart disease runs in our family so me an' Mag went back to th' old game. It's less excitin', but there's more in it."

### HIS FIRST LESSON.

An Amusing Story of a Cadet's Experience at West Point.

Mr. Farley, the author of "West Point in the Early Sixties," tells how he received his first lesson in military discipline. He had been the butt of various jokes during the early part of his attendance, and was perhaps a little off guard in matters of mere etiquette and routine.

Just after "call to quarters" in the evening the sentinel tapped on our door and called out: "All right?"

The reply not being satisfactory to him, he opened the door and inquired if any one had answered "All right."

"I did, sir."

"Who is room orderly?"

"He is, sir."

"Why did he not answer?"

"Because I did, sir."

"Why did you answer?"

"I don't know, sir."

"Why do you not know?"

"I forgot, sir."

"Well, young man, don't ever forget again."

"Now," said the sentinel, "I inquire, is it all right in this room?"

"All right, sir," responded the room orderly.

"What is all right?"

"Everything is all right, sir."

"Is everything all right?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is that basin all right?"

"No, sir."

"Is that pillow all right?"

"No, sir."

"Do you know, young man," the sentinel said, "that the rules and articles of war require that you should be tried by court-martial and dismissed from the service for trifling with a sentinel on post in this manner? In time of war the sentence would be death."

The Reviewers.

Jesse Lynch Williams, the noted playwright and author, commiserated the other day with a literary friend whose new book had been harshly criticized by the reviewers.

"Back up," said Mr. Williams, "you don't expect the reviewers to be infallible. Why, at luncheon yesterday one of them said to me:

"I get through, on an average, 50 books a week."

"Good gracious!" said I. "How do you manage it? Why, it takes me at least a day to read one book."

"I don't read them, sir," he said. I replied: "Hum."

### WITH THE FESTIVE GRIPPE.

Written by One Who Evidently Has "Been There."

The gripe is the most vicious of diseases. It begins in the night and sleeps not by day. Nor will it let its victim sleep. Where it comes from is not known, but everyone is aware when it gets there, that it has come to stay. It takes off its things and puts its trunk in your best room. It seems to be on an indefinite leave of absence from home to make life as uncomfortable for its host as possible. It puts its feet on your best furniture, uses your best linen towels to clean its shoes, and takes especial delight in leaving its dirty linen about for you to pick up. It assaults you from the front and from the rear. It pounds away at your head until you can stand it no longer; it runs up and down your spinal column; puts your legs out of commission and destroys your appetite. The gripe is the most unfeeling and thoughtless of all diseases. Where some diseases are content with affecting certain organs or certain portions of the human frame, and letting it go at that, the gripe comes in and lays siege to the entire system of human economy. It knows no feelings of decency or consideration. It laughs you to scorn, and when you are alone it mocks your groaning. Of all diseases spare me from the gripe.—Detroit Free Press.

### CHANCE TO MAKE A PAIR.

Smart Young Man Had Less Fun Than He Anticipated.

Whoever is acquainted in the vicinity of St. Johnsbury, Vt., knows of Orville Lawrence, of whom many stories are told like the following:

Mr. Lawrence was driving up to the St. Johnsbury house with a little fox terrier sitting at his side. A sporty young drummer was sitting on the piazza smoking a cigar in company with some friends, and he resolved to have some fun at the expense of Mr. Lawrence.

"Sir, how much will you sell that dog for? I should like it very much for my wife, who loves pups."

"Wall," said the old man, "you had better take it, and then your wife will have two."

### Origin of the "Broad Arrow."

The unmistakable "broad arrow," of which the escaping Gloucester convicts naturally tried to rid themselves as soon as possible, has no inherent penal significance, but is simply the sign of state ownership on the prison clothes, says the London Chronicle. How this arrow came to be a royal mark is quite uncertain. The story that it was taken from the arms of Henry Viscount Sydney, who was master general of ordnance at the end of the seventeenth century, is exploded by the fact that it was a royal mark before his time. Pepys hankered after the idea that the "arrow" might be really an anchor, and others have seen in it a commemoration of the English archers' prowess. It has been boldly identified also as the three nails of the cross, as a mystic Druid letter signifying superiority, and as the symbol of Mithras as sun god.

### The Spaniard of To-day.

I find the typical Spaniard of to-day in an Aragonese peasant, elderly but lithe, whom I lately saw jump from the train at a little country station to examine a very complicated French agricultural machine drawn up in a siding; he looked at it above and below with wrinkled brows and intent eyes, he ran all around it, he clearly could not quite make it out; but there was no flippancy or indifference in his attitude toward this new, strange thing; he would never rest, one felt, until he reached the meaning of it. And the grief of many of us will be that in this eager thirst for novelties the Spaniard will cast aside not a few of the things which now draw us to Spain.—Havelock Ellis, in the Atlantic.

### A British Institution Failing.

As regards the long and deadly warfare between the turkey and its flat-breasted rival, the goose, for the prime honors of the Christmas dinner table, an expert confesses that the goose's defeat in popularity is probably irretrievable now, according to an English exchange. "The flesh is proving," said he, "too rich for the delicate tastes of well-to-do people, and there is not enough of it for the poor. None the less, for the real trencherman who has a healthy gusto and a well-filled purse, your turkey, which has to be helped out with sausages and bacon to give it a flavor, is nowhere in it with your goose."

### Hint for a Short Sermon.

About 25 years ago the annual session of the Maine Methodist conference was held in Portland. The Rev. John Collins, a canny Scot, was then in his prime, and a member of the conference. He was called on to open with prayer one of the afternoon sessions, which was to be addressed by a minister whom we will call Mr. M., a man who was well known as a lengthy sermonizer.

Remembering this failing in the course of his prayer "Uncle John" exclaimed: "Oh, Lord, bless Brother M., who is to preach to us; may he preach the everlasting gospel, but may he not be everlastingly about it."

### Sickness as Age Advances.

At the age of 20, the average man loses six days yearly by illness; at 65 he will lose 26 days.

### TROUBLE AHEAD FOR JACK.

His Well Meant Advice Evidently Caused All the Trouble.

Recently a lady was seen hurriedly approaching the gate at the Grand Central Depot, in New York. She had a travelling bag in one hand, a hat box and a bunch of flowers in the other and an umbrella and a box of lunch tucked under her arm. There was not a moment to spare, but the gatekeeper stopped her mad rush.

"Let me have your ticket, please," he commanded.

"I can't," she said, turning first red and then white, "but I have one. Please let me pass. I've got to catch that train."

"You will have to show your ticket, madam," repeated the gateman sternly. Tears glistened in the lady's eyes.

"I tell you I can't, it's—it's— Well, I planned in my— Oh, I put it where I wouldn't lose it, and I can't get it till I have a chance to— Oh, do please let me through!" She was allowed to pass, and was heard to say as she made a dash for the train:

"The next time Jack worries me into putting things where I can't lose them I guess I'll know it."

### CONFIDENCES OF A CODFISH.

Revealed Secret of His Lengthy Absence From Home.

Capt. Collins, a well known fisherman of the banks, was persuaded into buying a large codfish by a fish pedler. After the departure of the pedler he saw it was not fit to be eaten, so it was thrown away.

In a few days the pedler again stopped at Collins' door. The captain went out to his cart and began to examine his fish. Suddenly leaning down, he placed his lips close to a large cod and began whispering to it. The pedler looked rather astonished at this, and as soon as the captain raised his head he asked what he did that for.

"Well," replied Collins, "I was just askin' him how his relatives were, out in the old ocean."

"And what did he say?" asked the pedler.

"He said," replied Collins, "that when he left them they were in good health, but as he hadn't seen them for two weeks, he did not know whether they were alive or dead at the present time."—Boston Herald.

### Nor Was His Neck Rubber.

The plaintiff's lawyer in the breach of promise case thought he would make life a burden to the unfortunate young man who was the unwilling defendant.

"Do you mean to say," he asked, after a number of embarrassing questions, "that after you had been absent for an entire month you did not kiss the plaintiff, to whom you were engaged to be married, when you first saw her on your return?"

"I do," responded the defendant, firmly.

"Will you make that statement to the jury?"

"Certainly, if necessary."

"Do you think that they would believe you?"

"One of them would, I know."

"Ah, indeed! And why should he, pray?"

"Because he was present when I first saw her. He was at the gate when I rode up, and she stuck her head out of the second-story window and I said to her, 'How d'ye do' and called out I'd be back to supper in half an hour. I'm no giraffe," and everybody smiled except the lawyer.

### Mistake of a College Girl.

Charles Dana Hazen, head of the history department of Smith college, had excused one of his pupils from recitation on account of sickness. Shortly after the recitation hour the professor had occasion to pass through the main street of Northampton, and, much to his surprise, saw his excused student coming from the opposite direction.

This was a critical moment for the college girl, who took in the situation with a glance. Something must be done at once to escape his notice. The book store nearby was her only resort, and if she could have reached it on time she would have been all right. In her excited state of mind she got into a saloon just one door from her intended hiding place. On discovering her mistake she rushed into the street and into the arms of the professor.

### Beats the Story Books.

For about 30 years Joseph Glover Southmay put off what he might have done any day. Consequently he has just reappraised at Middletown, Conn., after an absence of 36 years. Funeral services were held for him a generation ago, when he was believed to have been lost at sea. The amazing part of the story is that Southmay for 30 years has been running a farm a little more than 20 miles from Middletown. There is room enough in this world, it appears, unless a man is really trying to hide.

### Terror's Effect on Hair.

It has been repeatedly affirmed that Queen Marie Antoinette's Auburn hair turned white in the days of the reign of terror, and an English surgeon named Parry states that just after the Indian mutiny he actually saw the jet black hair of a rebel Sepoy, who was under examination and feared a dreadful death, turn white in the course of an hour. In the time of the commune in Paris, the dark hair of Baron Alphonse de Rothschild was blanched in a few hours.

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