

BREAKING THE ICE.

We had some offish neighbors once that moved in, down the road. We reckoned they was 'bout the proudest folks we'd ever knowed. An' when we passed 'em now an' then we held our heads up high. To make dead sure they couldn't snub us if they was to try. It really made me nervous, so I jes' braised up one day. An' thought I'd go ahead an' show my manners, anyway. On Sunday, 'bout a 'turnin' round an' 'zain' at the view. I looked at them an' says: "Hello!" An' they says: "Howdy do!" It wa'n't the cold an' formal greetin' that you've sometimes heard. They smiled an' said it hearty, like they meant it, every word. It's solemn to reflect on what we miss along life's way. By not jes' bein' natural an' good-humored day by day. There's lots o' folks who fling the simple joys of life aside. Because they dread the shadow of their own unconscious pride. And nine times out o' ten you'll find the rule works right an' true. Jes' tell the world "Hello!" and it'll answer: "Howdy do!" —Washington Star.

UNCLE JACOB'S STORY

BY ANNIE HAMILTON DONNELL.

Uncle Jacob Knapp sat on an old chest, drumming with his heels against the battered side. He held up to the caller's view two twisted, misshapen fingers.

"This shist an' them fingers," he said, "take 'em together, make quite a yarn, as yarns go."

"Oh, tell it, Uncle Jacob! tell it, do!" importuned the Visitor.

"Well, time's slack, I don't mind if I do. Mebbe you ain't noticed how suit o' stoopin' over I be? Well, that goes along with the fingers and the chest. 'Tain't old age done that—no, sir, 'tain't! The Knappes are great on keeping straight as a die—till they die."

Uncle Jacob, having risen to display the curve in his back to the Visitor, sat down on the old chest again.

"It's a case of sins getting visited on to the third and fourth generations, as the Good Book says they do. I'm the third generation. 'Twas my grandfather done the sinning. He stole."

The Visitor sat forward on his chair, intent and eager. Could Uncle Jacob's grandfather have been a bank cashier? The Visitor was not quite sure there were bank cashiers as long ago as Uncle Jacob's grandfather; so, a little disappointed, he sank back again and waited.

"Yes, he stole—doughnuts. He wasn't only about as old as you be"—the Visitor winced and tried to touch his dangling toes to the floor—but that wa'n't any excuse for grandfather. And he was just the lungriest boy you ever see!"

Was there anything personal in that last clause? The Visitor decided that there was not and felt relieved.

"And he specially relished great-grandmother's doughnuts. They were the spicest, slipperiest, tasty kind o' doughnuts that don't last a minute after you begin on 'em. The receipt come down along with the chest, an' I've eat them very same kind o' doughnuts time and often. They ain't prudent doughnuts to make—they're too good."

Uncle Jacob made a sudden inspired trip to the pantry, and came back with two doughnuts. "Try 'em?" he said, hospitably. The Visitor at the third bite was moved with forgiving sympathy for Uncle Jacob's erring grandfather.

"But I might as well commence to the beginning," he went on. "This chest I'm sitting on is a hairloom in the Potter family. It fell to mother and then to me. We set a store by the old chest, now I tell ye!"

With his twisted fingers he smoothed the time-polished lid affectionately.

"It was great-grandmother's wedding chest, with her finery and sheets in it—then grandmother's and mother's. She give it to me, not having any daughter. It's been a terrible grievance to Aunt Patty, not having any daughter, neither to make quilts and holders for, to put in the old chest. It would have been a sort of comfort—"

Uncle Jacob's eyes looked out of the window, toward the little grassy cemetery where the Visitor knew was buried a tiny baby daughter. The Visitor stole a little nearer to the old man.

"Land of liberty!" Uncle Jacob presently continued, "there's a sight of stories this chest could tell—stories of wedding clothes and burying clothes. There's been three generations of little heels banged against it, drumming tunes. There's the dents mine made!"

Uncle Jacob leaned over and pointed out several little dents half-way down the chest's side.

"Them's mine, and them, there, is Uncle Caleb's dents. I've always remembered mother's pointing them out. And seems to me—I ain't so sure of that, though—that that terrible big dent is the one grandfather made with the chisel when he stole the doughnuts. But I ain't so sure—I don't know but it's the other one over there, nigher to the hole."

The Visitor sat forward again on his chair. Then the story was coming at last?

"Stole the doughnuts, you say, Uncle Jacob?" he said, with gentle insinuation.

"What's that? Oh, the doughnuts? Land of liberty, ain't I told you that yarn yet? I'm a terrible critter to go preambing along! Now we'll get down to business. You see great-grandmother kep' this chest up attle to store summer clothes in winters and wisy wery, winter clothes in summers. She was a terrible hand to keep things just so. They say she always used to keep great-grandfather's winter shirts to one end of the chest and the summer ones to the other end, when it come their turn to be stored. And once, when she was laid up with phthisis, one o' the family packed the clothes away for her. When she come to unpack 'em, they warn't in the right end, and it worked great-grandmother up so that she had another spell of the phthisis. That's what they say, but, land of liberty an' freedom, you can't believe more'n quarter what folks says! Now right over to Cross Corners, opposite the meeting-house there useter be an old woman that folks said—"

The dangling toes of the Visitor beat a persistent tattoo on the rounds of his chair. He would never get to the story! Uncle Jacob must be switched off from that Cross Corners road instantly and on to that "chist" again. The Visitor's supper bell would ring presently, and he wanted to hear that doughnut story first.

"Say, Uncle Jacob, did you say your great-grandmother kept her doughnuts in the chest?" the Visitor asked suddenly.

"Oh! well, she didn't, not to say keep 'em there, but she hid 'em there once when she was going to camp-meetin' with great-grandfather to spend the day. She locked 'em in good and secure, but along about noon time, I reckon 'twas grandfather got real doughnut hungry. He didn't want the mince pie and cookies and baked beans all ready for him in the buttery—he wanted doughnuts, and grandfather was just as set as—well, as I be! I calculate setness is just as hereditary as the consumption. Now, there's the Beases, they—"

"Didn't he like the mince pie?" broke in the Visitor, hastily. The Visitor was fond of mince pie.

"No, he didn't. He wanted doughnuts, and he had 'em. He kep' hunting all the afternoon for 'em, getting hungrier and hungrier and setter and setter. 'Long about milking time he went up attic and poked round there. Then he knew he'd got 'em! He could smell 'em! You could smell great-grandmother's doughnuts, they do say, clear from their house to the schoolhouse—far's from here to Job Milliken's, I calculate. Anyhow, you could smell 'em through inch boards, and grandfather smelt 'em through this chest—a real tasty, mouth-watering smell. He couldn't stan' it. He got the chisel and hammer, and cut a hole right through where you can see that cleat nailed on. It's a terrible jagged hole you can see from inside, but that was because grandfather was in such a pucker. He was doughnut-

hungry. But he was a master-hand at tools, for a boy, other times."

"Well?"

"Well, he eat 'em up—that's what. Then he went clear out to the joint o' the roads to meet great-grandmother an' own up. That's the kind of boy my grandfather was!"

The Visitor straightened back and dilated eyes indicated that if ever he were tempted—doughnut-tempted—that would be just his own mode of procedure—even to going beyond the "joint of the roads."

"He was quite a man, my grandfather was!" Uncle Jacob kept on, drumming the old chest with vigorous heels. Then he looked down on the two uncomely fingers on his right hand, and they appealed to him remindingly.

"Well, grandfather died of a good, green old age. The chest lived along through another generation, up in that attic; then it was moved over to our attic. Father was a real neat man, an' the doughnut-hole sort of worried him. So he nailed a cleat on the outside of it temporary, till he could get time to mend it better. The fire come about that time. We boys slept in the north chamber and woke up all of a sudden, smelling smoke. Sure enough, the house was afire. Land o' liberty an' freedom and union!—didn't we boys fly round getting things out! And all at once I recollected the old chest an' put for it. It was terribly smoky, and I was kind of dazed and turned round. I lugged the chest across the floor to the top of the staircase and started down ahead of it. I got it started down all right and then it up and stuck fast, just by that cleat over the doughnut-hole! Couldn't move it at all for a spell, till I got desperate an' hove it like all possessed—"

"Did it hudge? Did you hudge it, Uncle Jacob?"

"Well, it hudget then! It went head over heels clean to the bottom, that time."

"Then you didn't have time to get it down, did you?"

"No—no, I didn't have time to get it down, nor myself, either. Me'n the chest come down together."

Uncle Jacob chuckled grimly. The Visitor went over and sat down on the chest, too, waiting for the rest. But Uncle Jacob was lost in reminiscences—going downstairs with the chest and "coming to," days afterward, on a neighbor's spare-room bed. After awhile he began to talk again.

"I was terrible sick," he said. "Laid up all winter and considerable used up for going on a year. Then two fingers"—spreading them apart from their brothers—"was splintered pretty thorough, and my back got a twist in it, too, somewhere. I calculate the matter of my spine got kind of churned up, going down, and never quite come to."

The Visitor's supper bell pealed faintly in the distance, and the Visitor got down from the chest.

"I'm much obliged, Uncle Jacob," he said, politely. "That's a very nice story."

"Well," Uncle Jacob answered, judicially, "it's got a moral to it. I hope you see the moral, sonny! Why, if grandfather hadn't have bored through to them doughnuts, father wouldn't have put that cleat on and the chest wouldn't have stuck—and them two fingers wouldn't have been crooked, nor my back neither. Land of liberty!—ain't that a moral long's the moral law? It reaches clean through three generations."

Uncle Jacob rose stiffly to his feet. "Good bye," he said.

"Good-bye, Uncle Jacob."

"Don't you forget the moral, sonny—and don't you forget, neither, that grandfather was a terrible good sort of a man—after he owned up. I don't lay up nothing against grandfather, not a thing. I've been doughnut-hungry myself."—Country Gentleman.

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Life's One Plain Rule.

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The Gentle Sex and Gentle Virtues

By JESSIE LLEWELLYN.



Women have been so long accustomed to man's generous designation of them as "the gentle sex" that they have come to complacently accept the theory of their monopoly of all the gentle virtues. Leaving vulgar computations and business strife to their husbands and fathers and brothers they attain to serenity in dispensing hospitality, or holiday gifts, or engraved cards, which the men have made possible, believing that in so doing they are living up to their native generosity. In reality few women are generous, the conventional woman who most lavishly entertains her friends, least of all.

Men whose business code is strictly "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" forget all about it when mingling socially together. There seems to be a sort of competition among them as to who shall give away the greater number of cigars. They scramble to get ahead of each other in the matter of cab fare and often become offended, at the turnstile in an elevated station, when not allowed to pay many fares for some numerous party, and they never think of repaying each other for such trifling favors.

Women, to the contrary, expect to be rewarded for their every social effort. Their sense of give-and-take—value received—is abnormally developed. They cannot suffer a favor to be done them without the mental remark: "I must meet that obligation." It is so in the custom of calling, which happily is less popular than it once was. A matron will leave a card upon an acquaintance, but if the acquaintance is unconventional enough to fatally postpone the returning of her own card until she may have the opportunity of seeing her caller in person that she may actually visit with her, social intercourse between the two ceases. The religion of women is a card for a card, and any heresy is punishable with social death.

A hypothetical young woman has a friend who is ill and whose family is suffering financial embarrassment; she offers her own occasional services as nurse. Returning home she begins to feel the honest glow of self-satisfaction in her small service when, alas! the expressman arrives with a little remembrance from the convalescent friend "in commemoration of your kindness." She ruefully feels herself paid for the common act of friendship and she knows, in reason, that the sender of the gift will herself expect to be "paid back" for any casual favor.

It is a sort of stinginess of motive—this failing of woman, an envious state of mind that will not allow the other woman the satisfaction which comes from generous giving. For how can she remain generous if she is inevitably "paid back?"

One woman invites to dinner a neighbor paying the same rent and with the same known income as herself. Instead of giving the neighbor pleasure she learns, upon receiving a "counter" invitation the following week, that she has but awakened competition; for her neighbor's dinner is much more elaborate than her own former effort. The strife begun, one of the two is compelled to give offense, in the end, to save expense.

Generosity and gratitude are two of the gentlest virtues and yet it sometimes appears that they are virtues more common to men than to the "gentler sex."

A Plea for Individual Work

By REV. FREDERICK E. HOPKINS

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IN this age of machinery, the present day shows, in divers ways, both good and evil effects of the dominance of apparatus. Especially in the work for the poor do we notice the tendency to displace individual activity with systematized, cut-and-dried efforts. Making on the whole, we think, not for the best.

We may be behind the times, may justly be called "moss-back," but still we cling to the belief in individual work; in man and woman going quietly about a great city, quietly, sympathetically helping wherever she aids he find work to be done. Newspaper notoriety may never be theirs thereby, no printed paragraph nor photograph announce their benevolence—which, however, need not be regretted by the toiler, and certainly will not by the toiled-with.

People cannot be raised en masse, if you would uplift the whole you must uplift the individual. The personal service is full of meaning. Let the lady of leisure, instead of declaiming beautiful theories in a crowded lecture room, herself go to some overworked mother, herself care for the babies and the home, while she sends the weary woman on an outing of an hour or so in the park. It may not minister so to one's pride or ambition, not be altogether pleasant; BUT IT WILL BE WORTH WHILE.

We are told corporations have no soul, and perhaps to the individual poor an institution, even one for social service, may hazily present this aspect. But deal he with one man or woman sympathizer and helper, he is bound to get in touch with something understandable, tangible. The brotherhood-of-man will have meaning to him, though it reach him not oratorically. He feels he has a friend, some one interested in his welfare; and a response stirs within him, a desire to be worthy. Nothing happens TO a man save something happen IN him.

Individual charitable work has been decried; the workers in general have been accused of following blind impulse, and of yielding to loose generosity. And the accusation has often been merited, the reproof gone home. Also, in the systematized labors there are observable tendencies not altogether admirable.

We would not be thought to undervalue the work of the social settlement or of organized charities—undeniably they have their mission; but with their cumbersome machinery, over-administration, should be more carefully avoided. We have heard of a machine for making nails, a piece of perfect mechanism, but there was one drawback; it would not work.