

MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS

By CARL SARGENT CHACE

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If there's one thing I'd rather do than all other things it's mindin' my own business. If there's one thing my Mandy'd rather do it's to mind somebody else's business. I allus tote her that the principal troubles we git into in this world is pokin' our noses into other people's affairs.

When Rogers and his wife come to occupy the farm adjoining our I tote Mandy to let 'em alone. Maybe she could 'a' done it if it hadn't bin that we could hear 'em quarrellin' clear across the fields a quarter of a mile away. That started Mandy. She was continually a-listenin' and a-watchin' and a-spyin' to see if she couldn't find out some'n.

It was about the middle of summer when Mandy's mother that lived in the adjutin' county tuk sick. She kep' a-sendin' for Mandy, but Mandy wouldn't go without me. I got in the airly crops and was gittin' ready for the later ones. Then one day a letter come sayin' Mandy's mother was a-dyin'. That settled it; Mandy hed to go, and I hed to go with her.

One mornin' airly I put the gray mare in the buggy to drive Mandy over to say goodby to her mother. We hadn't slep' more'n half the night from hearin' the quarrellin' goin' on between the Rogerses. Jist as we got on to the road, Mandy, who couldn't keep her eyes off our neighbor's house, saw Rogers go outen his house carryin' the limp figure of a woman in his arms.

"Law sakes!" says Mandy. "He's killed her."

"Supposin' he has," says I. "Tain't none of our business." And, whippin' up the gray mare, I driv along in a hurry so's Mandy couldn't see any more of it.

Was, Mandy's mother was a con-sarned long time dyin'. Mandy wouldn't stay there without me, she wouldn't come home with me and she wouldn't let me come home without her. Consequence, was we gone a long while. After Mandy's mother died, knowin' the crops was sufferin', I got home as soon as possible. As we was a drivin' along Mandy says, says she, "Wonder if they've discovered the murder," and I says, says I, "Jest you keep your mouth shet."

I was mighty busy after that and didn't think about nothin' but gittin' in my corn, but Mandy she went snoopin' round to find out what was known about the murder. All she could find out was that Mrs. Rogers hed gone away. She asked where Mrs. Rogers hed gone, but no one knowed anything 'bout it.

Fearin' she'd git us into trouble, I tried to stop her questionin', but it wasn't no use. She jest talked and talked till the wimmen suspicioned somethin', then they turned in and did a lot of questionin' on their side.

I stopped her jest in time to prevent her tellin' the whole story; but, consid-erin' she'd talked so much and nobody knowed where Mrs. Rogers hed gone, people began to suspect that was somethin' in it.

First thing I knowed Rogers was arrested for murderin' his wife. He couldn't tell where she was, 'cos he said he didn't know. They weren't livin' happy together, and after a bigger quarrel 'n any they'd had before she'd left him. But everybody knowed that, and Mandy 'n me knowed a good deal more. Somehow the idee hed got abroad that he'd murdered her after one of their fights, and the authorities was determined to find out about it.

When the case was ready for trial sure enough a constable left a paper at the house, summonin' me and Mandy as witnesses.

"There you be," I says to her. "If you'd 'a' kep' yer tongue in yer head you wouldn't 'a' been pestered to tell about some'n as don't concern you."

"I'm perfectly willin'," she answered, "to tell what I know—it's my duty. That's what you want to shirk, Ellsha; you don't appear to reckon you've got any responsibility in the gov'ment of yer country."

"A man," says I, "as can't govern his wife's tongue isn't fit to bother his head about his share of governin' millions of men, women and children."

This shet her up fur a few minutes. The day of the trial come on. That wasn't no real evidence agin Rogers—only circumstances plintin' to some'n. I was put on the stand and questioned, but I didn't hev to say nothin' about seein' Rogers carryin' out a body jist about dawn. I'd tote Mandy, too, not to tell it if she wasn't asked. Bein' sworn to tell the bull truth and nothin' but the truth, she out with it.

The bull court, speculators and all, was electrified. Rogers started up to say some'n, but he was ordered to keep quiet. Funny, isn't it, they won't let the person most interested say what he knows. Was, the prosecutin' attorney was a-thunderin' agin the murder when the court was electrified ag'in.

The murdered woman walked in. "Judge," she says, "I seen in a paper that my husband was a-goin' to be tried fur killin' me. I jist come back to say that if there had 'a' been any killin' I'd 'a' done it myself."

The court adjourned and the prisoner was set free.

"I'd like to know," says Mandy to Rogers, "whose body you carried out that mornin'."

"The crows was eatin' the corn and I wanted to stop 'em. That body you seen was a scarecrow."

Fairly Warned.

A man who was writing a telegram at one of the long tables in the Western Union building was asked in German by one of two men who stood near him where they could find out how much a telegram to a certain place in the far west would cost. The man volunteered to make the inquiry, did so and returned, saying that they might send a message of ten words for a certain price and that address and signature would not count. After assuring himself that the men could write he walked away, but was stopped at the door by one of the strangers with profuse thanks. "I have been in the city only a few days," he said, "and was told on shipboard and since I landed that everybody would try to swindle me. I spoke to two men today, and both did me a favor. I no longer have any fear." "That's right," said the man, "but, just the same, look out for the third man."—New York Tribune.

She Loved His Tomb.

An immensely wealthy widow who gave yearly hundreds of thousands to charity decided to personally inspect some individual cases of deserving poverty herself. One of her agents brought before her a poorly clad woman, saying:

"Here is a poor old woman, a very decent sort of person. Her husband used to go about with a dancing bear. This creature, though usually very tame and gentle, one day threw itself on its master and ate him up."

"Alas, my good sir," the old woman broke in, "since that moment the poor beast and myself have been without a home."

"What! The beast?" asked the wealthy woman. "Is it the same that devoured your husband?"

"Alas, my good lady, it is all that is left to me of the dear lamented one."—New York Herald.

Sleep.

The first sleep is the soundest—after the first hour the intensity of sleep slowly diminishes; hence the value of forty winks after dinner in quickly recuperating shattered powers. Temperature and vitality are lowest at about 2 a. m., so that two hours' sleep before midnight are worth four thereafter. Nature has no rule as to the length of sleep, except that men need less than women, since women are the more sensitive creatures and a woman's heart beats five times more in a minute than a man's. Sleep should be just so long that when you wake in the morning a stretch and a yawn only are necessary to land you in a daytime of bounding vigor. As to early rising, it is comforting to hear Dr. Bryce say it is a habit that has gone far to wreck the constitutions of many a growing youth.—London Express.

He Met His Match.

The Russian marshal Suvaroff was famous as a jester and was fond of confusing the men under his command by asking them unexpected and absurd questions. But occasionally he met his match. Thus one bitter January night, such as Russia only can produce, he rode up to a sentry and demanded:

"How many stars are there in the sky?"

The soldier, not a whit disturbed, answered coolly:

"Wait a little, and I'll tell you." And he deliberately commenced counting. "One two, three," etc.

When he had reached 100 Suvaroff, who was half frozen, thought it high time to ride off, not, however, without inquiring the name of the ready reckoner. Next day the latter found himself promoted.

Gypsies and Death.

The custom of placing the property of the dead in their graves has always been followed by the true Romany gypsies. It is due to some old tradition of ill luck attending the possession of an article whose former owner is gone, and much valuable property is buried in this belief. There is also a sentiment among gypsies against the possession of anything that has belonged to a dead person, because it serves to remind the living of the departed and inspire in them a dread of death. The custom of burying their property with gypsy dead dates from the earliest history of the Romany tribes.

Odd Superstitions.

In England there is a superstition that if a bride and groom eat periwinkle leaves together they will love one another. Should he after marriage prove recalcitrant here is a way to win him back: Take a piece of the root of a wallflower and a partridge's heart, roll them into a ball and make the man eat it. If you want to know whether your lover loves you, crush some bleeding heart. If the juice is red, he does; if it is white, he does not.

His Mistake.

They were in the thick of their first quarrel.

"I thought your tastes were simple," said the husband. "I didn't expect to find you such a high flier."

"Yes, you did," she answered. "You knew all about my being a high flier, as you call it, but you thought I'd be dirigible."

Golf Stick and Scythe.

"Your boy Josh is something of an expert at golf."

"I reckon," replied Farmer Cortnosel discontentedly. "But he can't make two licks with the scythe without foinin'."—Washington Star.

Trouble teaches men how much there is in manhood.—Henry Ward Beecher.

An Evangelist

By OLIVE EDNA MAY

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"Elijah," said Mrs. Dunkers, "thurs an evangelist goin' to preach for us nex' Sunday. I wisht you'd go 'n hear him. You don't know how mis'able it makes me to be in the fold and have my husband out of it."

"What's an evangelist?"

"An evangelist is one of them minister's the Lord sends onct in a while to stir up the feelin's o' them as can't be teched by ordinary means."

"One of whom I am which."

"Yes, you be, Elijah. I'm sorry to say it. I hope you'll go and hear this boy man and maybe he'll teech your heart."

Mahuida Dunkers sighed and walked away. Her efforts to bring her husband under the influences that guided her always proved abortive. He was a matter of fact man, while she was emotional. By some he was called a scoffer, though no one ever heard him speak disrespectfully of religion. He disliked cant and those disposed to cant called him a scoffer because he was not of their ilk. The couple lived in the far west where extremes were in vogue. This had made the wife an extremist in matters of religion. If the husband was an extremist it was in the manifest presence of the devil who seemed to guide both the good and the bad in Nuggetville.

Sunday morning came and a few minutes before service time a man in clerical garb was seen descending the trail. He walked with a firm step and carried a prayer book in his hand. The Reverend Mr. Salandy was unknown to a single person in Nuggetville. He had sent word that he would preach there on that Sunday morning and hoped that he would move every un-Christian man, woman and child in the camp to repentance.

Elijah Dunkers saw the evangelist coming and watched him descend the canyon.

"What makes ye scowl so, Elijah?" asked his wife. "It seems that everything holy has a contrary effect on ye. Can't you look at a man of God without showin' the impiety there is in ye? It isn't you that's scowlin' at this servant of the Lord; it's the devil that's got a hold on yer heart."

"Jes' you go to meetin', Mahuida. What ye got to put in the hat?"

"I got four ounces o' dirt."

"Ye got'n to give four ounces o' dirt to that!"

"Forbear, Elijah! Forbear! Don't speak impiously of the Lord's anointed."

Elijah turned away. His wife made one more effort to induce him to accompany her to the grove that was one of "God's first temples," but he paid no attention to her.

The evangelist found the people of Nuggetville assembling and taking seats on the boards ranged in front of a stump to which a piece of scantling supporting an inclined bit of timber for a book rest was fastened. Mounting the stump he said:

"My friends, I wish before beginning the service to ask if any one of you have brought to this place consecrated to the Lord's service any of those hellish machines used to kill your fellow men. If so please go and deposit them at the foot of that tree over yonder."

He waited while several of the men present, awed by his impressive tone, deposited their revolvers and knives as he directed. When they were again seated the evangelist asked if any other person was desecrating the place and called down the wrath of heaven upon them if they were. This resulted in the deposit of two more weapons, after which the service proceeded.

Mr. Salandy proved to be one of those men who have the faculty of pouring forth a torrent of words, working on their hearers more by their personal intensity than by what they say. Excitable himself, he excited others. His word pictures of the terrible damnation in store for those who did not do what he told them to do were lurid as an approaching tornado. Mrs. Dunkers, the most emotional woman in the congregation, became hysterical. The evangelist finished his exhortation with the following words:

"And now, my hearers, I wish you to plant on this holy ground a church. I desire that one of your number pass around the hat to receive your contributions, and remember that as you give so shall you be received at the last day into heaven."

A white headed man arose, passed around a hat, and when he had finished set it down, overflowing with gold dust and coins, at a point indicated by the evangelist. Then the good man dismounted from the pulpit stump, walked up to the hat, faced the congregation, drew a .42 caliber revolver, covered those present, picked up the hat and said:

"You're the easiest plucked lot o' gals I ever relieved o' their dust."

He was turning to walk away with the plunder when a shot knocked his revolver out of his hand, and before he could recover Elijah Dunkers had downed him.

"I knowed ye," said Elijah, "as soon as I saw ye comin' down the canyon. Ye won't play evangelist no more."

That evening after a rope ceremony at Nuggetville, Mrs. Dunkers was very sad.

"I'm thinkin', Elijah," she said, "that practicin' religion and makin' fools of ourselves is two different things."

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Poor Pickings.

The new boarder had never been on a farm before. She was filled with interest and delight in everything she saw. On the morning after her arrival she saw Mrs. Howe apparently picking berries from some pretty green plants beyond the wall as she strolled in the road.

"Those are charming little plants," she said, pausing, with her eyes fixed on a pall which hung on Mrs. Howe's arm. "What kind of berries grow on them? Does it take long to fill a pall like that?"

Mrs. Howe looked down into the pall with a meditative air and answered the second question.

"I should hope 't would," she replied. "What kind of berries are they?" persisted the young woman. "I can't quite see. What are you picking?"

"Tater bugs," said Mrs. Howe as she made another contribution to the depths of the pall.—Youth's Companion.

Public Speaking Explained.

The Japanese visitor to the city was asked to make an after dinner speech. He arose and began quaintly.

"I often wonder," he said, "why it is you Americans will hinder your digestion by making these after dinner speeches. We Japanese rest after our meals. It is much better. I know that I traveled with a Japanese legation over the United States, and everywhere the Americans would make us dine, then ask us for speeches afterward. We would much rather have dined at our hotels and retired afterward to rest for the following day. I asked some one why it was, this universal after dinner speechmaking among the American men at public dinners, and he replied that the American man never had a chance to say anything at home and that was why."—New York Press.

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duties required him to have the store swept by 7 o'clock in the morning. He had been late for many mornings, and on the sixteenth consecutive time his employer remonstrated with him thus:

"Dan, why can't you get here on time?"

"Well, Mr. L.," said Dan, "yer see, I live the other side of Mount Hermon cemetery and can't always get here on time."

"Why in the world do you live so far from your work?" said his employer.

Without a moment's hesitation Dan responded.

"Yer see, it's dis yere way, Mr. L.—I'll be honest wid yer—I wants a home beyond the grave."

Testing His Scales.

"Thank heaven James has quit calling me Baby!" said the woman who weighs over 200 pounds. "A strange butcher shamed him out of it. It was done unconsciously too. That is why it was so effective. Since I began to diet I have been weighed often. The other day when James was buying liver for the cat he remarked that he wished there were reliable scales in the neighborhood to weigh Baby on."

"Said the butcher, 'Bring her down here.'"

"Thanks," said James; "I will!"

"James told me the butcher was expecting us, so we went. He was ready for us. He had rigged up a nice little shawl arrangement suspended from the hanging scales to put baby in, and then he was introduced to—me. James hasn't called me Baby since."—New York Times.

Curious Old English Law.

It is interesting to recall in connection with railway accidents that only a few years back any instrument which by accident was the immediate cause of loss of human life became in English law "deadend"—that is, became forfeit to the crown, to be devoted to pious purposes. This law applies to locomotives, but in course of time coroners' juries, instead of claiming the forfeit, inflicted a fine. In the

year 1833 a locomotive on the Liverpool and Manchester line which by exploding caused the death of its engineer and fireman was fined £20, while the following year another engine on the same line was fined £1,400.

Making Sure.

"Johnnie!"

"Yes'm?"

"Why are you sitting on that boy's face?"

"Why, I—"

"Did I not tell you to always count a hundred before you gave way to passion and struck another boy?"

"Yes'm, and I'm doin' it; I'm jist sittin' on his face so he'll be here when I'm done countin' the hundred."—Houston Post.

Napoleon's English.

Napoleon I. began to learn English at St. Helena, and there is a letter extant from him which begins: "Since six weeks I learn the English and I do not any progress. Six week do forty and two days. If might have learn fifty word for day I could know it two thousands and two hundred."

Lucky Dog.

"My wife is excessively fond of her poodle. Actually, I'm beginning to look on it as a sort of a rival to me."

"Say, you're lucky. I'm only a sort of a rival to my wife's poodle."—Kansas City Times.

Her Excuse.

Widow (to dressmaker)—You must really wait awhile for payment for the mourning dresses. We are still too sorrowful to consider financial matters.

The Fault of Ridicule.

There is no character, however good and fine, but it can be destroyed by ridicule, however poor and witless.

Observe the ass, for instance. His character is about perfect, he is the choicest spirit among all the humbler animals, yet see what ridicule has brought him to. Instead of feeling complimented when he is called an ass he is led to doubt.—Mart