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SNOWBALL'S RETURN

Young Prodigal Saved the Widow's Cow and Won Wife for Father.

By MADELINE ADA LEIGHTON.

"We have been friends for a good many years, Lydia."

"And let us continue the same, Daniel."

The scene was in the neat parlor of the village home of Miss Lydia Parker, spinster. Her caller—and suitor—was Daniel Brackett, ten years a widower. They were a well-matched couple, she in the matchless perfection of mature loveliness of face, figure and mind; he in the strength of a really noble manhood.

"I have waited a long time to ask you the question nearest to my heart," he went on. "I am disappointed, Lydia—and a trifle hurt."

"Daniel," said Mr. Lydia, "we can be straightforward with each other. I was the school girl friend of your dear wife. I am the friend of her lonely, wandering boy. You have asked me if I would marry you. I will not answer that question till you have taken Wilfrid back where he belongs—to your home and your love."

Daniel Brackett took up his hat and left the house. He was not only troubled, but sad. Wilfrid, his boy, had been a wild, reckless lad, impulsive, always in difficulties, but whole-hearted and generous to a fault. One or two boyish scrapes the indulgent father had overlooked. Then one night the son was a member of a Halloween party which wound up in an accidental blaze. A farmer's barn was burned down. Mr. Brackett paid fifty dollars to prevent trouble for Wilfrid, and banished him from the house.

"When you have earned that fifty dollars and repaid it," said the father sternly, "you may come back to your home. Not before."

That was six months since. From that day until this no word had come from the homeless lad. Forty miles



Somehow the People of the Town Found Out What the Strange Procession Meant.

away from Brandon, however, at the very hour when that important interview was in progress, young Wilfrid Brackett, brisk, big-eyed and bright as a dollar, was tramping his way down a stretch of railroad, whistling merrily.

Wilfrid had "made good." Better than that, he had become prod. He could laugh over his youthful follies now, and not believe himself very much of a sinner. Still, he experienced a deeply, dignified sentiment in his heart that made him feel that he would be welcomed at the place he was bound for—home.

"I've done the right thing," he told himself as he trudged along. "Father set me a task. Well, I've learned it. I got a job among the clam shell fishers up Dalton river, had some luck, and I'm going home not only with the fifty dollars, but as much more to the good."

Wilfrid stepped aside to allow a slow moving freight train to pass him. Then he gave a great start as its last cars swung around the long curve. He stared in sheer wonderment at the figure of a little girl not more than ten years of age, clinging to the top of the iron ladder on one side of the car and huddled up against its rounds.

"The mischief!" uttered the astounded boy. "She must be scared to death, or the pluckiest girl I ever saw."

Wilfrid posed to catch at the ladder as the car reached him, swung under the clinging child, and supported her against his arms. She was softly crying.

"See here, little girl," gasped Wilfrid, "what are you ever doing here?"

"Snowball," was the single response.

"Who's Snowball?"

"She's our own dear cow. They're taking her away from grandma, who is sick in bed. If she finds out that Snowball has been taken away, she'll just die, I know she will. Grandma raised Snowball. She's one of the family, and we get half our living from her milk."

"And where is Snowball?" questioned the bewildered lad.

"She's in this car. I saw the man

drive her in here from the cattle pen. I won't leave her till I find out where he's taking her, and I can take her back to grandma."

Just here the train took a siding and halted. Wilfrid made the child climb down to the ground and rest her tired arms, by telling her that he would "see about things."

A brakeman and another man came strolling from the caboose. They stared strangely at the pair. Wilfrid began to explain. The man with the brakeman smiled before the narrative was concluded.

"Poor little thing!" he said. "I'm sorry for her, but she don't understand how affairs stand. I'm a constable from the county seat. Mrs. Granby owed some money, and there's an execution out. I didn't want to disturb her by levying on her household goods, so I took the cow."

"And this brave little child followed poor Snowball," said Wilfrid. "Officer, is the amount very much?"

"Forty dollars and costs," was the reply, with a sympathetic look at the child. "I'd pay it out of my own pocket if I wasn't a poor man."

"If I can pay it, will you release the cow?" asked Wilfrid.

"Yes, and throw off my fees, gladly," replied the officer.

Wilfrid was parting with hard-earned, proudly-prized savings, but he felt like a royal kind as the transaction was completed, a slanting platform run up to the car, and Snowball delivered into his keeping.

The officer wiped away a suspicious moisture from his eye as the little girl threw her arms around the neck of the snowy white animal, cried over her recovered pet, and then laughed for joy.

It was only ten miles back to her home. Wilfrid led Snowball with a halter. Part of the way the girl rode on her back.

Somehow the people of the town found out what the strange procession meant. An enterprising reporter eagerly gathered up the material for a good story, and when Wilfrid left the happy child and her pet at their home, the wires were clicking an incident of rare human interest all over the country. The afternoon papers had it, including the Brandon Evening Telegram.

"I told you Wilfrid was worth while. I knew he had the making of a grand man in him—and what do you say now, Daniel Brackett?" demanded Miss Cynthia at the Brackett home at eight o'clock that evening. She pointed to the newspaper she had brought with her on her impetuous, unceremonious visit.

"Yes," answered Mr. Brackett humbly. "Wilfrid is a splendid boy."

"You start right out finding him, Daniel Brackett," ordered the spinster sharply. "or I'll never speak to you again."

"No need, father! Miss Parker!" cried a cheery voice, and the boy in question burst into the room.

The warm, fatherly greeting made everything all right, but it was the emotional Miss Cynthia who caressed Wilfrid and wept over him, and was proud of him for his unselfishness.

"There's that fifty dollars, father," said Wilfrid in a business like way, placing a roll of bills on the table.

Mr. Brackett pushed it back sheepishly. Miss Lydia's eyes twinkled. Her would-be suitor sidled up to her. "That question I asked you this morning, Lydia?" he insinuated gently.

Miss Werner placed a loving arm about Wilfrid.

"I'll think about the answer," she said simply.

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FIX VALUE OF HUMAN LIFE

In England, it Would Seem, It is Appraised at the Sum of \$100.

English editorial writers, gravely commenting on the slight value attaching to human life in Mexico, quite overlooked a couple of cases which were reported in the columns devoted to local news. The first case which failed to receive the attention of the editorial writers was that of Moorhouse, the well known aviator, who was fined \$100 and costs for killing a carter by the reckless driving of an automobile.

The other case was that of a school teacher, twenty-seven years old, who had been teaching school for ten years. Her salary was \$50 a year. In order to support herself and her mother she had to eke out her salary by working as a waitress in a restaurant. Recently a member of the school committee recommended that the teacher's salary should be increased to \$100 a year. The committee has not yet acted on the recommendation.

Found at Last.

Joe D. Blades, the noted inventor, who resides in the wilds of Bracken county, says he has found perpetual motion, and is building an automobile to be propelled by this power. He says that the power to run the automobile will be produced by springs. When one spring is running down the other one is winding up, thus creating perpetual motion. The auto is now about completed and he says it will be on the road in a short time. It is a self-starter. When you sit down in the seat the machine is put in motion; when you get up it stops.—Falmouth (Ky.) Outlook.

Sensible Father.

"You say you want to marry my daughter?"

"Yes, sir. After thinking the matter over I have reached that conclusion."

"You have, eh? Well, I want her to marry a man who is not so all-fired deliberate!"

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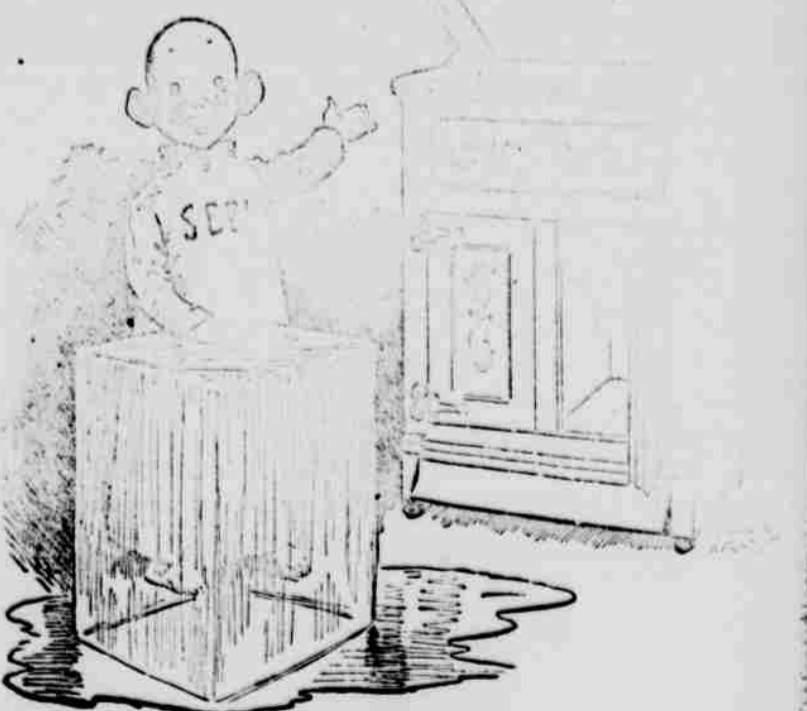
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