

Good Stories of The Business World.

The BEST POLICY AFTER ALL.

By W.W. Woodbridge



"CLIF!" HE EXCLAIMED. "YOU HIRE!"

HE door closed softly. It was some minutes before the man at the desk looked up from the pile of letters he held.

"Clif!" he exclaimed. "You here?"

Other, a youth of 18, stood silently before him, one hand still on the knob of the door. His lips trembled and tears shone in his eyes. They were brothers.

"Discharged," sobbed the youth, sinking into a chair, crossing his arms on the grapher's slide and sobbing like a child. An expression in the deep gray eyes of the man at the desk grew tender, and he placed his arm over the shaking shoulder of his younger brother.

"Tell me about it," he said.

"There's not much to tell," sobbed the youth. "My first month would have been a horror, and I—" His sobs interceded him. After a time he continued.

"It was like this. There was a man that was called round, and the boss got tired of coming, and told me to tell him next time he came that he was out. I can't lie, I couldn't be a liar; so when the man came in next time, I just said the boss had sent me. When he asked me why I came out something, and then he led me right into the inner office unannounced.

The boss blew me up sky high when he saw me after the man had gone, and he told me straight out why I hadn't told him because I couldn't. He got red in the face and told me that a fool knew more business than I did, and that a fool could make a better business man, and then he took my grip on myself and said a fool was the fool a liar.

That he flew up and said he wasn't being called a liar by a sniveling little fellow fresh from Sunday school, and sent the bookkeeper and paid me off, and—

The man reached down into a lower drawer of the desk, selected a cigar, lighted it, and some moments in silence, watching the end of the smoke drift up towards the ceiling.

"Well," he said finally, "you did strike a row of stamps for a beginner." He

laid his cigar down and leaned back in the great leather chair. "Your beginning and mine were pretty different. I wasn't loaded down with morals when I started in, but acquired them with old age. I'll never forget my first job. I knew just about as much about work as you do about dishonesty. I was good and green from college, and college can give a man about as thick a coat of veridancy as any place I know of, anyway, if he expects to rub up against the money prop.

"My idea of getting a job was to have plenty of letters of recommendation, so I got enough to bury me. The faculty gave me one, our family doctor and all of father's friends. I found that they were about as easy to catch as the measles, and nearly as useful. You can no more tell a man's character by the letters he presents than you can tell the character of a cheap restaurant by the menu chalked up on the board in front.

"Well, when I found there was a vacancy in the office of a concern that my father had had some dealings with, I went to 'apply.' I trembled as I sat there in the private office and began to realize that it's not as easy as it looks to dink a man into giving you the place. The man was 'self made,' with the brand yelling at you. I was supposed to be a stenographer, as I had taken a correspondence course—minus the study.

"There's no better way to learn stenography than to take one of these courses if you'll buckle down and make good, but I wasn't that kind. I had the theory down to a fine edge, but had no more practice than an eight months' lawyer.

"I was sitting across the desk from the man about like you are now, and the questions he put to me would make a civil service examination look simple. I answered as best I could, and what I didn't know I guessed at—and I don't believe he knew the difference. I informed him what a great thing I was, and how I'd mastered the curves and tiny circles quicker than any man on record. I told him of the smooth flowing hand I wrote, and how I was this, and wasn't that, and wouldn't be the other, but—

"He began to be impressed and told me the salary was small to begin with, but at this I just shrugged my shoulders and told him the salary was nothing to me; I just wanted to show him what I could do. He said that was the proper kind of talk for him and that he would expect great things from me. Then I knew I had hooked my fish, but after the hook is well in the trouble comes in landing.

"He asked me what machine I used, and I think I said McCormick's. He said he'd never heard of it, and wanted to know about the keyboard. I said it was rather peculiar, but I could soon get on to his. I'd never touched a typewriter in my life! The confab ended with an invite to call around Monday prepared for work.

"I turned up bright and early first of the week and brought along a 5-cent note book and pencil. I remember the bookkeeper nudged the office boy and they laughed as I took my seat before the machine and carefully lifted the carriage. I ticked the type up and down once or twice, and then had to ask how to put the paper in.

"The bookkeeper was my salvation! He is down in my list of saints. I've also got him hired in the office outside. I know a good man when I see him, and that bookkeeper is one of the best. He sat there for an hour and taught me all about the running gear of the machine, the cleaning, and gave me a general idea as to fingering.

"When I took my seat again I was well aware that there were some things that I still had to learn. When the boss bolted through to his little den I was just able to knock off 'Yours truly' correctly and was proud that I could do it so soon. I must have written twenty pages of 'Yours truly,' and the boss spoke of how well I was getting on to the combination of the new machine. This was my first compliment, and I blushed to say I took it.

"A customer came—to smile on me—and I had two hours more to play with the machine. Finally the buzzer rang me up, and he gave me a list of about five hundred envelopes to address. As you know, I write a fist like a mackerel, and the pen I had to use sent a splutter of blots before it as I pushed it across the page. The bookkeeper was at dinner, and I didn't know where to find a new one. I wish I had one of those envelopes to show you now.

"The boss passed through the office after I had about fifty addressed and stopped to look over my shoulder. I heard him whistle softly, and then looked on, saying not a word while I addressed about fifteen. He said he wished he had time to stay longer and watch me do it, but would doubtless have time to do so later. Then he reached over my shoulder and tore up the whole lot I'd addressed, and kindly suggested the typewriter as being an easier way of doing it.

"The bookkeeper returned and found me nearly in despair, and again he rescued me. I read off the names and he addressed, and when the boss returned there was a neat pile on his desk, and he spoke of how quickly I had done the work, and how neatly, and I lied without saying a word.

"Well, that was my last lie, the very last! At nights I was studying, really studying on that course in shorthand, wrong. The lies I had told the boss on the first day were held up before me with every look he gave me. I found he was making inquiry for another man, and all hope left me.

"Just before the beginning of the next month, and I was sure to lose out then, the boss was suddenly and seriously taken ill, and I had to stay it out for another month.

There was nothing much doing in the office for myself or the bookkeeper, so he set in to help a drowning man, and I learned a few things.

"By the time the boss got back I was able to write a fairly decent letter—but lie—I'd have died before I'd told one. When my friends asked me was I secretary or just stenographer, I told them I was an incompetent office boy, and didn't even lay claim to filling clerk.

"So this is the way I found the policy of honesty—aside from the question of right and wrong—was well worth the while. I don't think—in fact I know I haven't told a lie since, and it pays most certainly. So just stick to it, kid, and you'll come through all right.

"There may be some men who want a dishonest man in their office, but those men find that it's no cinch to keep one eye on the correspondence and the other eye on the money drawer. There is not time for both. Be honest, and you command the respect of every one, but—"

He paused and puffed some moments in silence.

"It was a hard lesson for you, but I'm glad you were discharged. It's opened your eyes to some things, and it'll help you in business. And it shows what's in you, too.

"Now, I've still got that vacancy I told you about after you took your last job. It's not much to begin with, but if you're half the man I think you are and half the man you've shown yourself to be, we may be able to raise the salary a trifle before the century grows too old.

"Go on now, stick to it, and remember that I'm bossing this joint, and you're special clerk in the honesty department."

He turned again to the pile of letters before him.

GEORGE ADE'S NEW FABLES IN SLANG --- 1912 MODELS

Pictures by Albert Levering

The New Fable of the Vultures Who Never Were Fed.

ONCE there was a Handsome Dog who was strong with every one except the Mother. He was commonly reputed to be his own worst Enemy, for he was with the Rum and rolled around and loved to greet joyously when it stood tip-toe on the Mountain-Top. He was our most consistent little hero.

Every other Rowdy-dow he loved by a Nice Girl of spot-reputation and large trusting eyes.

One of her Friends formed a band around her and did the Hammer on the Anvil, but when the Looking Scamp hunted her again and called her Little and said she looked awful to him and smoothed back her hair, she forgot the Solemn things and did the Cuddle.

They were Married and then the Rappers got out their matches and gave him any from One Week to 90 Days of his right Trilby back on the Grass Foot-Rail.

They are not all Rooters, no matter what Ibsen says, and the end of the White Light Cir-

cuit settled right down as a Carpet-Slipper and Feed-the-Furnace Push-the-Lawn-Mower Husband.

Worst of all, he became a confirmed Wife-Lover, the most contemptible of all Human Beings, next to the One who eats Graham Crackers in Bed.

The Prophets who had put up all the 24-Sheets killing his Downfall were so Peeved that they barred him from the Duplicate Whist Club.

Moral: The dutiful Husband can be found only in Real Life.

The New Fable of the Two Brothers, the Even Start and the Contrast-ing Termini.

ON a Flag Station the Job of Telegraph Operator is about the Limit of Earthly Ambition.

Therefore two Boys living in a weedy Hamlet began to hang around the Depot and learn the Morse Alphabet.

In due time each became a regular Railroad Man with Calico Sleeves and a Tooth-Brush in his upper Vest Pocket.

They were transferred to the Junction and began to have dealings with the Old Man himself and cuss when No. 6 balled up the Schedule.

Being quick on the Trigger and good at sizing up Men, they got



Worst Of All, He Became a Confirmed Wife-Lover.

into the Operating Department, and each had a Card-Case full of Annuals.

One accepted an Offer to go up into Canada and crack the Whip over a Line being projected by British Capitalists who were too well-bred to get out in their Old Clothes and prod the Help.

The other remained in the Land

of his Birth to push an Extension into the Northwest.

Each delivered the Goods in his own Bailiwick—spanning the turbulent Streams, filling the deep Hollows, boring through the Hills and bringing a new Empire out of the lonesome Wilderness.

When the Gauk who had been transformed into a Canuck cleaned up on the big Assignment, the Directors gave him a Dinner and the King sent for him to come up to the House and kneel on one Knee and be dubbed the Earl of Saskatchewan.

The Brother wanted to attend the Ceremony, but he had to send his Regrets as he was in Jail at the time.

Moral: Only a few receive Titles, but many are Indicted.

The New Fable of the Brash Parent and the Tell-Tale Tin-Type.

ONCE there was a worried Parent whose only Son could not quite make up his Mind whether to join a High School Frat or go on the Stage.

He was at the long-legged Age and walked Loose and stepped on his own Feet and whenever he walked briskly across the Floor to ask some Tessie to dance with him, every one crowded back against the Wall to avoid getting one on the Shin.

He combed his Hair straight

back, like a Sea Lion, and in Zero Weather wore a peculiar type of Low Shoe with a Hard-Boiled Egg in the Toe.

His overcoat was of Horse Blanket material with Surcingle and the Hat needed a Hair Cut and a Shave. When he topped off this Mardi Gras Combination with a pair of Yellow Gloves that sounded like a Cry for Help and went teetering down the Street, his Father would vent Delight over the Fact that the Legislature had passed Game Laws.

One day at Luncheon Father got so Steamy that he had to blow off. So he opened up on Son and practically wiped him off the Map. He sure burned him Alive.

He kidded the whole Make-Up and said he was the Male Parent of a Champion Gillie, whatever that is. Putting Son on the Operating Table in front of him, he proceeded to dissect him, Stem by Stem, in the meantime displaying his Aptitude for the Rough School of Humor.

He said the Hat was a Scream and the Overcoat was a Riot and the over-lapping Collar with the dinky Four-in-Hand was a Comic Supplement and why had such a Freak been wished on to a hard-headed Business Man.

He laughed brutally at the low comedy Shoes with the swollen Promontories and the Trousers with the double Reef and the folding Cuffs and the Hair with the Patent-Leather Gloss.

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Mother sat back tapping her Foot and trying to hold in, but she was Sore as a Crab, for she loved her Lambkin.

Finally she could not stand it any longer, so she rushed to Boudoir and produced from Bureau Drawer the Tin-Type which Papa had slipped to her just 8 weeks before they faced the Justice of the Peace at Akron, Ohio.

It was the True Likeness of a Male Hyena whose Hair was combed low on the Forehead into a gummy and passionate Cow-Lick.

He had one of those Gates Ajar Collars that was primarily intended to display the Adam's Apple in all of its naked Splendor.

The Shirt was ruffled the same as the Lingerie in a Book Advertisement and the Watch Chain was of Human Hair, which is now regarded as a Penitentiary Offense.

The Boutonniere was a Carnation against a Leaf of Geranium with Tin Foil below, which is no longer being done in the Best Families.

The form-fitting Trousers led gradually up to Congress Gaiters pointed on the End like Nut-Picks.

Father took one Peek at Exhibit A and then gave Albert a V, and told him to hunt up some of his Boy Friends and take them to a Matinee at the Orpheum.

Moral: Whatever you may be, your Parents were more so at the same Age.

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