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THE FOUR PINS.

The Count Bleski, a nobleman of Poland, was a very ambitious man. His public utterances had displeased the government. He was arrested, condemned to imprisonment for life and confined in a dungeon far under ground. He had no light and never could tell when it was day or night. He had no one to speak to, for no one was allowed to see him except the keeper of the prison, and he was not permitted to speak to his prisoners. He had nothing to do. Days, weeks, months passed on and he was still in his dungeon. He was never brought to trial and the unfortunate man was most miserable. He thought he would lose his senses, for his reason began to give away.

Feeling all over his blouse one day he found four pins and he actually wept for joy. Yet what could they be to him? He took them from his blouse and threw them on the floor of his dungeon and then he went down on his hands and knees and felt all over the floor until he had found them.

This he continued to do day after day, week after week, month after month, until the months rolled into years. But they were no longer weary years. He had now an object in life. He would defeat the purpose of his jailers, who fondly hoped to make him insane. He would live now until he became an aged man, cheered by the companionship of his four pins. And then, when he had become too old to move about his narrow dungeon, he would be content to lie down with his four silent friends and die.

In his dreams these pins would often assume familiar shapes. Their heads would take on the likeness of his friends and his relations. They would talk and laugh with him. How happy were these dream moments to the condemned. There was his dear old mother's face. How she beamed upon him! And there were his beloved wife and his two rosy cheeked children—they kissed their chubby hands to their father. His heart seemed bursting with joy.

One night he had a fearful dream. He dreamed he had lost his pins! Oh, horror of horrors! The perspiration broke out in great drops upon his face, his arms, his breast. Thus he found himself when, with a hoarse cry, he awoke. He realized quickly that it was only a dream. His beloved companions were found in their accustomed place. What a sense of relief now filled his heart as he again betook himself to slumber.

Ten years had passed, and the prisoner and his pins were still inseparable. His keeper, who never yet had spoken to him, was now regarded with a new interest. He feared that this man—hated as one of his oppressors—had discovered his occupation, and that he would endeavor to deprive him of this solace. Carefully now he guarded his pins.

One day he lost all his pins! He had scattered them, he thought, as before, but now they eluded his grasp. He carefully felt over every inch of the floor of his dungeon. Again and again he repeated his search until he grew weary of the task, but not one pin could he find.

As he lay angry and despairing on the stone floor he was aroused by the noise of the keeper removing the chairs and bolts from the door. Presently he entered, bearing with him the prisoner's scanty supply of bread and water. By the dim light of the torch which he carried the prisoner fancied he could discern a mocking smile upon his face. This, then, was the cause. He had stolen his pins! He was now rejecting at his discomfort! He must have discovered them while the prisoner slept. Hate now filled the soul of the condemned. His occupation had been stolen from him, but a new thought at once engaged his mind, diffusing through him a kind of mad joy. He would devise a means to torture, to kill his keeper. He knew that this man—the satellite of an offensive government—despised him. He would be revenged.

For a long time he gloated over his contemplated plan. How long he knew not. When suddenly a light shone before him. It came from the torch borne by the keeper, who had returned. Placing his torch in a crevice in the wall he walked to the opposite corner of the dungeon from that in which the prisoner crouched, and, turning his back toward him, began to fasten a chain to the wall. Ha! he was then to be chained to the wall. His blood boiled at this new indignity. He wished to attack the keeper at once, but he had no weapon. His eyes fell upon his hands. They were long and sinewy. He had once been a strong man, but long confinement and lack of nourishment had weakened him. The keeper was undoubtedly a strong man. All this while he remained with his back to the prisoner. It was plain he regarded him with contempt and did not fear an attack. He even hummed a fragment of an insulting song.

HOMESPUN HEROISM

BY C. B. LEWIS
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When Zeb Johnson, Farmer Jones hired man, came to the end of a row of corn, he took a seat on a stump to think things over. He realized that he couldn't glean much consolation from mere thinking, but a crisis was to be faced.

The evening before, after having courted Jennie Taylor, the daughter of another farmer, for a year or more, he had asked her to marry him and had been refused. Zeb's courting had consisted of escorting Jennie to a Fourth of July celebration, a circus and a cornhusking. The intervals had been filled in by what he called "sitting around" and declaring to himself that she was the sweetest and handsomest girl in all the world.

There wasn't the slightest doubt in his mind that he loved her, and he was equally sure that he was loved in return. It was therefore with a feeling of supreme confidence in the success of his errand that he had dropped into Taylor's and tried to keep his blushes back and his feet on the floor as he said:

"Jennie, I was just thinking that we ought to get married in the fall."
"Oh, you were?" she replied, looking up at him.
"Yes, I couldn't love you any more if we was to court for five years."
"Who's been courting?"
"We have, of course, and I want to say—"
"Don't say it," she interrupted. "I never even suspected you were courting. You've been hanging around more or less, but I supposed you came to see father."
"But I've been loving you for a whole year and want you for my wife," he persisted, paling and shutting his feet.
Miss Jennie was darnin' a hole in the heel of one of her father's socks. She stopped her work as she said seriously:
"Zeb, I couldn't marry a farmer. If I can't find my ideal, I shall never marry at all. I'm somewhat romantic, you know, and I'd be perfectly miserable if I married a plodder."
"Do you mean that you want to marry some dude of a feller?" asked Zeb, who had never heard of ideals or romance.
"No, of course not. He must be brave and gallant and save my life."

And so Zeb saw the situation at a glance. You are a real good fellow, Zeb, but you are no hero. I think Lucinda Jackson would make you a good wife. Don't blame me, Zeb, and don't get desperate and jump off the barn. I know you want to talk for an hour or two yet, but it wouldn't do any good. Good night, Zeb. The sooner you shine up to Lucinda the quicker you can ask her to marry you.

Zeb Johnson went home a stricken man. In a dim way he knew what Jennie sighed for. She was looking for an armored knight to come along on a prancing coal black steed and kill three or four villains and bear her off in his saddle. Zeb had no armor, no coal black steed, no desire to kill. He was simply out of it.

He sat on the stump and thought hard, but no consolation came to him. The best thing he could get out of it was a grave under a willow tree, a grave over which Jennie might come and weep when tired of waiting for her knight.

"Yes, it shall be death," said Zeb as he rose from the stump. "I'm lop shouldered, knee sprung and hump backed, and I couldn't be a hero if I was paid a hundred dollars a month. There's nothing left but to hang myself."

they were not chevaliers. There was nothing suave and gentle and courteous about the way they ordered her to sit down and keep her mouth shut. She had blundered upon them, and they didn't propose to let her go and give the alarm before they were ready to move on. With their outlaws, their vile jokes and their threats she had a had quarter of an hour of it, and her knight came not.

Zeb Johnson did, however. He came with slow step and downcast head, as is proper when a man is going to hang himself. He was thinking of Jennie and wondering if it hurt much to hang oneself. There was a tear in one eye and a gleam of determination in the other when he suddenly appeared before the ragged, dirty trio and their prisoner.

The tramps might have bolted if they had had a minute's warning, but as it was they had to fight. Zeb saw the situation at a glance, and the light of battle flamed up in his face. It is a good thing to go out to hang oneself and find a scrap of land to postone matters.

It was a fight that uprooted bushes and small trees and plowed furrows up and down the glade, but at the end of ten minutes Zeb was victor and had the three on the earth under his feet. He was still breathing hard and wiping the blood off his nose when a gentle voice wailed out:
"Oh, Zeb, Zeb, suppose you hadn't come?"
"But I did come," replied Zeb, "and I guess I've given 'em a licking to last a year. Where was that hero of yours?"
"I-I don't know."
"Ought to have been around, hadn't he?"
"Y-yes—that is, no. No; I don't want him."
"Anything happened?"
"Yes, I've got all the hero I want. Zeb, I'm sorry, and if you want to get married, and if—"

"Well, let me kick 'em a few times, and then I'll go home with you and ask the old folks what they think about it. It was lucky I thought of playing the fool and hanging myself."

Puzzled the Frenchman.
Sergeant Harry, who acted as usher in the White House during Cleveland's second term, told this story: "I will never forget the message President Cleveland sent to Secretary Olney one night. It was this way: There was an eclipse of the moon that night, and President and Mrs. Cleveland were much interested in watching it. 'I don't believe Olney knows about it,' said Mr. Cleveland, and he will be sorry to miss it.' Then very quickly, 'Harry, go telephone Olney to look at the moon.'
"I went to the phone, and Olney's chef or butler or something French answered. The president sends word to Mr. Secretary to look at the moon,' I said. 'To look at vat?' answered the Frenchman. 'The moon,' I repeated. 'Ze vat?' again he asked. 'The moon,' I spelled. 'The moon.' 'Is ze president in his mind?' 'Yes; he tells Mr. Olney to go look at the moon. Give him the president's message.' 'But vat for iss dat-to look at ze moon?' I then said a word or two and rang off.
"About an hour later the same butler called us up and, with more density in his tone than even before, said, 'Monsieur le Secretary desires to say to Monsieur le President zat he hass looked at ze moon, and he iss mooch obliged.'"

Didn't Suit Washington.
Until the early part of the last century Milford, Conn., had a house in which Washington was said to have spent a night. It was in 1789, when Washington made a tour of New England. Tradition says that there were certain things about his stay at the Milford tavern which he did not enjoy. The supper set before him consisted of boiled meat and potatoes. He was not pleased with the meal and asked for a bowl of bread and milk. The landlord brought the new order and a broken pewter spoon with which to eat it.
"Have you no better spoons than this?" asked General Washington.
"It's the best I have in the house, sir," replied the host.
"Send me the servant," said his excellency. "Here's 2 shillings. Go to the minister's and borrow a silver spoon."
"Tradition does not add whether he got the spoon or not."

Fairly Warned.
An old circus man says that he once arrived at Steelton, Pa., early in the morning to make arrangements for a circus performance at that place. To obtain his license it was necessary to see the burgess of the town. The first person he met was a large, burly Virginia negro, who was on his way to work at the steel works. He approached the fellow and said, "Captain, can you tell me where I can find the burgess of Steelton?"
"Say, boss, I is a stranger around here myself, and all I can say is keep away from dem Burgesses. He is engaged to be married one time to Mary Elizabeth Burgess, and dey is a pesky lot of niggers."

THERE IS NO UNBELIEF.
There is no Unbelief!
Whoever plants a seed beneath the sod
And waits to see it push away the clod,
Trust he in God.

There is no Unbelief!
Whoever says, when clouds are in the sky,
Be patient, heart, light breathth by and by,
Trust the most High.

There is no Unbelief!
Whoever sees 'neath Winter's fields of snow
The silent harvest of the future grow,
God's power must know.

There is no Unbelief!
Whoever lies down on his couch to sleep,
Content to lock each sense in slumber deep,
Knows God will keep.

There is no Unbelief!
Whoever says to-morrow, the time, 'n' all,
The future, trusts that power alone
He dare disown.

There is no Unbelief!
The heart that looks on when dear yel-
lows close,
And dares to live when life has only woes,
God's comfort knows.

There is no Unbelief!
For thus by day and night unconsciously
The heart lives by that faith the lips deny,
God knoweth why.

THE COURSE OF THINGS.
"It's been for years, and I s'pose it'll keep on bein'," remarked Mrs. Markeley to her husband, at the same time knitting her brows and looking more intently at the letter which she held in her hand.
"What's that that's keepin' on a-bein'?" returned the husband, removing his glasses from their proper place and pushing them on the top of his head.
"Now, Phil, I'll just tell you. Here I've been for the past four years lookin' forward to the time when Nell would come home from that colleg' an educated woman, but now I've read her letter, and all them cherished hopes are thrown to the winds. We must wait another year before she comes home, that'll make it five years her bein' away gettin' an education. I do believe that if it didn't take so long for a body to get these things, I wouldn't be so prejudiced against them. She writes and asks for her usual yearly allowance."

"I s'pose we better send Tom to town at once with a check, so that she'll get it in the mail that she'll be most likely to look for it, for like as not she's needed money long 'fore this," said Mr. Markeley.
"Phil Markeley, I do believe you'd sell the last cow we had on the place to give Nell everything she wants," rejoined his wife.
"Well, you know, Mary, that now-a-days the one thing most needed is a good education, and Nell bein' our only girl, I feel that we might as well do all in our power toward liftin' her in this world. If she has an education, she can come home and teach our school, then I know there wouldn't be the wrangle there always has been, and I don't have no doubts but what Pete Jones would send his seven boys, and like as not Abe Smith would let his girls come, too, cause all them boys and girls were always mighty fond of Nell."
"I hadn't thought of that," said Mrs. Markeley. "I guess she plays music, too. We could get an organ in town, and have it rung out and set in the best room, and then we'd have Nell teach the Smith girls and I s'pose if she didn't charge much, Ben Walker would let Mary, his oldest girl, and Beth, the youngest, and maybe them between, learn to play, for I never saw a man in all my days that loved music like Ben does."

Before the sun had gone down Tom had been to town, posted a letter to Nell, containing a check, which would enable her to complete her education. Tom drove home that night thinking of his sister, whom he had not seen for four long years.
"Days grew into weeks, and weeks came to be months, and only an occasional letter came from Nell.
"Tom, a stalwart farmer boy of twenty years, wondered what change four years at boarding school could have upon his sister. Mr. Markeley feared his daughter would want to marry some worthless college chap, who would never amount to a farthing, and poor Mrs. Markeley had fearful forebodings that Nell would want to take to fixin' and turnin' things upside down in and about the house and farmyard.
"At last Nell graduated and sent a message that she was coming home. Mrs. Markeley arranged the house. Mr. Markeley tended the yard and Tom hurried the horses, taking special care with the one that was to be driven to the station, to meet Nell, a distance of three miles.
"The morning of her arrival came at last, as Tom drew near he saw his sister, now a woman of twenty-two, possessing a lovely face and an education, and Tom wondered how Nell could ever be content again at home. Mr. and Mrs. Markeley greeted their daughter with usual parental affection. Nell soon made her father to know that she had no matrimonial intentions, and her mother to observe that she took delight in making her old home cheerful and comfortable.
"The fall school term opened with Nell as teacher, and every Saturday was spent in imparting music, the one study Nell loved, to the children of the neighborhood.
"It's ben for years, and I s'pose it'll keep on bein'," remarked Mrs. Markeley, as she observed Nell coming up the road from school, one evening.
"Yes," said her husband, "and it's education that changed the course of things."—Womankind.

Stanley Weyman's First Novel.
Stanley Weyman first thought of writing up the romance of early French history when sitting moodily in the smoking-room of his club mourning over his bad luck in literature. The plot of his most successful novel flashed across his mind as he was washing his hands preparatory to going to dinner.—Current Literature.