

The Boy Who Ran

The boy was running at a steady pace. The pace was not a fast one. It might have been called a jog trot. The boy trotted easily, his clenched hands against his breast, and his chin up. He might have been twenty, but he had a boyish look that was emphasized by his smooth cheeks, his curly hair and his big blue eyes.

His trot carried him by an elderly woman in a phaeton drawn by a fat and slow paced horse. He did not look around as he moved ahead. He was interested in his task and more especially in the road ahead of him. The elderly woman looked after him curiously. Then her look suddenly changed.

"One of those invalids from the sanitarium, I s'pose," she murmured half aloud. "They do set em the most outlandish tasks. Poor boy. He's thin enough now without getting any thinner. An' he looked like quite a worthy young man, too."

She touched up the fat horse with the whip lash, but the sagacious animal merely shivered slightly and steadily plodded along.

Presently she came in sight of the boy. He was walking now, walking with a firm stride, his arms dangling and his head well up.

The old lady coaxed the fat horse into a trot.

"Now, Billy," she said, "you've been having things made easy for you all the way. Let's see how grateful you are. Git up."

The fat horse, as if acknowledging the possession of a conscience, quickened his pace, and after a little steady effort caught up with the stranger whose pace had again slackened.

The woman drew the fat horse down to a walk.

"Good mornin', young man," she said in her brisk and yet pleasant voice. "How do you find yourself this morning? Better, I hope?"

The boy looked up at her. She noticed that he had high cheek bones and many freckles. And there were two red spots on his freckled cheeks.

"Yes, ma'am, better," he answered and there was a queer twinkle in his blue eyes.

"I'm glad of that," she said. "It seemed to me that the treatment looked a little severe."

"It's the treatment I need, ma'am. But you can't gain any flesh running about the country in that way."

The blue eyes twinkled again.

"No, ma'am, but I can lose some."

She stared at him.

"Is it recommended to you by a doctor—a regular physician?"

"No, ma'am. It's recommended all right, but not just to me. But I know it's what I need. I ain't rich enough to have a doctor, so I'm lookin' after myself."

The gray eyes were dimmed by pity.

"Poor boy," she said.

The tone touched the stranger.

"I don't mind it," he laughed. "I'm pretty comfortable."

The motherly face was still clouded.

"I guess those doctor's folks in the village mean well," she said, "but sometimes their ways of helpin' people seem a little severe. I'm goin' to the village. Won't you get in the buggy an' finish out your treatment a little more comfortably?"

He shook his curly head.

"That wouldn't help me any thank you, ma'am. But I'll walk along side your carriage. If you'll let me."

"To be sure you may," the old lady replied. She drew up the reins and spoke to Billy.

"That's a fine fat horse you have, ma'am," said the stranger as he strode along by the carriage wheel.

"Billy is a pet and sadly spoiled," said the old lady.

"Maybe a little of my treatment would help him, ma'am."

They both laughed at this and then the kind old face grew grave.

"Do you cough?" she solicitously asked.

"No, ma'am."

"They don't in some stages," she murmured.

"I did cough a little," he explained, "but that was before my broken rib slipped into place."

"You had a hurt then?"

"Yes, ma'am. It bothered me quite a bit. You see I didn't know anything about it until—until it was all over, and the bone jabbed me in the lung."

Again the kind old face clouded.

"I have an excellent strap for coughs," she said, "but as far as I know it isn't good for anything else."

A smile lighted the freckled face.

"Thank you, ma'am. If I get a cough I'd be glad to try it."

The old lady nodded.

"My name is Miss Summers," she said. "Elen Summers. My home is back on the road where the big oak stands by the gate."

"I know the place, ma'am, an' a fine little place it is. An' a great oak it is, too. Sometime I'll drop in when I'm runnin' by an' have a taste from the glass that stands on the old well box, ma'am."

"You'll be quite welcome," the old lady told him. "We think the water is very good. An' there is always plenty of cold milk in the cellar, an' very often a pitcher of buttermilk."

"Thank you kindly, ma'am, I won't forget. But here's where I turn down the side street—an' so I wish you a very good day, ma'am."

She watched the slender figure as it strode away, and sighed.

"Poor boy," she murmured.

s'pose they are very often like that—fact cries arose from the Harris so sure they are going to get well home. This was followed by the again. An' maybe, it's just as well sudden reappearance of the boy. He the folks don't tell him the truth," was in full retreat followed closely And old Billy plodded along at his by the terrible Harris favorite gait and was not reproved. The boy ran a little ways and then It was two days later that the boy something remarkable happened. The opened the gate and came up the lad suddenly turned and attacked the path in the wide spreading shadow big pursuer with tremendous vigor of the great oak.

The old lady was sitting on her the wife beater. The brutal husband vine covered porch. She shaded her eyes with her hand as he approached. He took off his cap. He was forced backward, shouting and cursing. The boy, close following, with lightning strokes, hammered down the big man's defense and finally forced him to the ground. As he fell he struck his head against the side of the house.

The boy was over the prostrate form in a flash and catching up ruffian's head by the ears banged it rudely against the side of the house.

At this the woman in the phaeton suddenly turned away.

Presently the banking stopped and the voice of the boy was heard. The woman could not bear the man's reply but the banging at once recommenced. Then it suddenly stopped and the boy spoke again.

When the woman looked around he was climbing the fence and the man and he drank two glasses with a had disappeared. The boy took his great relief.

It's fine," he smilingly told her. And are you still continuing the treatment?" she asked him.

Yes, ma'am," he answered. "I've helped me a great deal. I've lost three pounds in a week."

Her compassionate look came back. "And have you no home?" she asked.

No, ma'am," he answered. "I can't remember that I ever had a home. I'm just a boy out of the streets. I've taken a lot of hard knocks but I've never seen this day when I didn't have enough to eat an' some kind of a place to sleep. An' that's about all there is to it, ma'am."

She shook her head at this some what grim bit of philosophy but before she could answer it he had drawn away from the porch.

"This won't do, ma'am," he said and his eyes kept up their twinkling. "I'm forgetting the treatment. Every moment I loiter here adds an ounce or two to my weight. Goodby, ma'am, an' heaven keep you." And he leaped down the walk to the highway and disappeared behind the high hedge.

"I wish old Dr. Phipps could see him," said the lady. "I feel sure his treatment is too severe. Poor boy, he up your hands. It's a small with no home and nowhere to go in his last illness. I'll talk to Dr. Phipps about it."

Next day the good lady was urging old Billy to a faster gait when the boy walking briskly came along side the ancient phaeton.

"Good mornin' ma'am."

"Good morning," she looked at him closely. "Did you sleep well last night?" she asked.

"Never slept better," he answered.

"An' I've lost nearly another pound, ma'am. If I can get rid of two more I'll be in fine shape."

He laughed as he said this and nodded comically.

Her heart warmed to him. He was so light hearted so carefree so in different to his own condition.

"I'm afraid it's not the right treatment," she said. "I wish to call in old Dr. Phipps. I will gladly assume the expenses. Come and make my home your home while he studies your case."

She spoke gently yet earnestly and the boy was much affected by her words.

"You're very good, ma'am," he said. "I'm not a man who ever was before. You don't know who or what I am an' yet you offer me a home. I ain't worth it, ma'am. I'm a bad lot. You're all mistaken about me. Listen, ma'am, an' I'll tell you the truth."

But before he could say more a sudden interruption startled them. From a cabin a few hundreds of feet from the highway came a shrill scream.

The old lady stopped the fat horse. "That's Bob Harris beating his wife," she said. "The miserable wretch must have a glass too much. Liquor makes him fighting mad."

Another scream rent the air. The boy squirmed uneasily.

"He's a cowardly dog," he growled.

"He's an ugly brute," said the old lady. "An' he's big and dangerous."

The boy hesitated.

"I would like to give him a wallop or two, that he wouldn't forget, but I'm afraid," he said. "I'm afraid of getting hurt."

He flushed as he said this, but the old lady didn't notice him. Her gray eyes were fixed on the cabin door.

"He certainly would hurt you," she said.

The boy drew a quick breath.

"The first thing I remember hearing," he said, "was the scream of my poor mother when my brute of a father whipped her. I made up my mind that there would be no wife boating in any part of the town where I happened to be and here I am, afraid the first time I hear a woman scream. But understand me, ma'am, I'm not afraid in my mind, but in my body. A single blow would spill all the good work I've been doing. It's a shame, ma'am. It makes me blush."

"I don't blame you," said the woman. "You're weak and ill and Bob Harris is ugly and big and strong. I think I'll go and reason with him."

Before she could step from the phaeton a half dozen cries of sharp pain rent the air. The boy saw the woman recoil and noted the pallor that overspread her face. He flung his cap on the floor of the phaeton, and tossed his cap after it. Then he leaped the fence and ran toward the cottage. When he reached the house he pushed open the door and entered. A moment after a babel of indistinct cries arose from the Harris

TOWANANDA CORN DRYING.

A Primitive Custom Still Surviving in New York State.

There are 500 inhabitants on the Towananda Indian Reservation in western New York. Though divided by clearly defined party lines into Christians and Pagans they retain in common many of their ancestors' primitive customs a very conspicuous one being the annual corn drying in the Indian style of expression. The corn drying season opens during the harvest time and closes just before the period when the first fall of snow is anticipated.

By braiding the husks which are not detached from the cobs several ears of corn are firmly secured in a cluster. Then near to the houses and but the corn clusters are closely strung on cross poles and the branches of trees and wind do the rest. When the drying is over the ears are taken down and stored.

Instead of being ground the corn is pulverized by means of a crude wooden mortar and pestle but in the Indian tongue both of these implements have the same name. Only a sufficient quantity of corn for immediate use is pulverized at a time and it is then sifted through fine sieves. Hominy is made of the hard flint corn and flour of the white squaw corn. The success of the pulverizing and sifting processes depends very much upon the corn being properly dried.

He Knew His Business.

A story is told of a well known amateur yachtsman who was one night anchored near a rocky and dangerous shore. Suddenly, just before dawn a stiff inshore wind started up. The anchor began to drag. Another was rapidly thrown overboard in the increasing squall that too fast to hold. The schooner seemed in imminent danger of drifting on the rocks but at last another anchor was thrown and the danger was past.

The yachtsman nearly exhausted his efforts dropped off the deck to recover his breath and rest. In the net that followed there came to him the click-click-click-click of a watch manipulated slowly against a wall.

He listened for a moment and then went below. The cook was preparing to address him.

"Why Sam?" he exclaimed, in astonishment. "didn't you know that we were well ashore?"

"Oh yassir, yassir," came the undisturbed reply. "I thought she was on de rocks, suah."

Well, in a case like that, don't you go on deck? We had a mighty one sail."

Well, you see it's like this. You can leave mayonnaise a minute and it'll turn right back."

Crimes and the Telephone.

From the beginning to the end of a transaction of crime the telephone brought into extensive use serving with sides with equal dexterity. The thief used it to determine which house he may safely rob. The man next door uses it to call the police station. The police arrive catch the burglar. The burglar into insensibility and telephone for the wagon or ambulance. The thief has some use telephone a lawyer to defend him. The lawyer telephones the clerk of the court telephones the lawyer and both sides telephones for their witnesses. When the burglar is convicted and sentenced the telephone summons the jailer to take for his prisoners. After that the telephone is kept busy by bankers, politicians and petitioners who make an effort to have the prisoner pardoned.

Opposes Course in Cobbling.

A suggestion that shoe repairing or cobbling be made a part of the manual training activities in the ungraded schools and in the Parental School of Baltimore has been made to the authorities, but the Sun of that city sees no merit in the scheme. It says: "That class of boys who would desire to become cobblers or who would profit by learning the trade have as a rule only a few years to devote to school, and those few years had best be devoted to learning how to read, write and cipher, with such other practical and necessary elementary studies as their time will permit."

The Technical Way Out.

Of Sabbath-breaking north of Tweed there is the story of the Scot and his wheelbarrow, which has been fathered upon Sir Archibald Geikie. Donald was hammering away at the bottom of his garden when his wife came to the door. "Mon," she said, "ye're making much clatter. What will the neebours say?" "Don't get ma' barra mendit," "Oh, but Donald," it's vera wrong to work on Sabbath," expostulated the good wife, "ye ought to use screwa."

Masks for Reading.

The bookseller displayed a kind of muzzle a contrivance of silk and wire to fit over the mouth and nostrils. "Reading mask," he said. "Latest thing from Paris. It is worn at the Bibliothque Nationale by the students of old books and manuscripts to prevent the inhalation of disease germs."

"These age volumes are nests of germs. In the great French library masked readers are as common as masked motorists in the boulevards."

Foul or Fair Weather.

Small Wallace accepted an invitation to a party, as follows: "Dear Louis: I will come to your party if it don't rain" (then thinking that he might have to stay home in that case)—"and if it does."

The Purple Poppy

By Grace R. Dweley.

One doesn't expect a man to butt in where women tread with dainty feet, nor does one look for such interest to be displayed by a man as Roger Camp showed that raw November night when he followed the Purple Poppy up the avenue. But the interest developed when it first passed by, flaunting in incomprehensible pride from a fur hat, black like the hair it sought to cover, but could not, for Roger saw the soft wave just back of one pink ear.

It was a black fur hat with a Purple Poppy on it," he said dramatically to his friend later in the evening. But the friend merely laughed and asked how long poppies had been purple and invited him to take something to brace himself up with. So he accepted the invitation and tried to forget it all, beginning with the sound of the quick firm step behind him the sudden glimpse of her face, the glory of the Purple Poppy that nodded a signal to him.

He had followed a long way, lost, it welcomed it again among a queer bobbing ocean of heads, had striven to catch up with it, and watched it disappear with a queer stinking sensation. It flew up the steps of the English tea room. Probably she was hungry or thirsty or whatever was on her when they frequent tea rooms. He reached that conclusion while he stood watching the soft glow that marked the windows where she must be. But it suddenly came to him that he could not reasonably expect such luck as that and knew that if he were to come face to face with the Purple Poppy and learn just what that enigmatical thing had become to him down the avenue it would be through his own endeavors. There desperation got in its work and without letting go its grip on him up the steps that had stood to shock of the Purple Poppy a passer-by.

Yes, sah," said the little braided buttoned dark at the door. "Just went to jes sah," and the girl enveloped him as Roger slipped a coin in the willing palm. The light dazzled him so that he couldn't have told the Purple Poppy had he seen it. A bright faced girl caught his eye and he followed her white cap to an obscure corner.

Then an unheard of thing happened. The Purple Poppy came and sat down directly opposite him. He glanced at him seriously and said in a voice of molten sweetness that rang in his ears afterwards. "I was so afraid you wouldn't come. I hurried, but I meant that you should come just the same."

He gazed into two big brown eyes and knew they belonged to the dream but they did not help him. Only sent him whirling into space. He looked higher up above the white curve of forehead until he reached the Purple Poppy and then he was quite sure. That was real a half hour ago. It was real now and the girl must be real.

"I was not sure you wanted me of course I couldn't be sure so stopped to think it over carefully. You see the Poppy caught my eye. He paused for an instant.

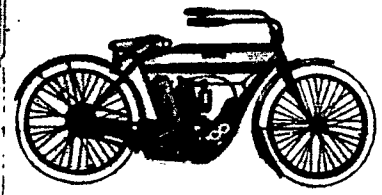
Yes I know of course that what I wore if for I knew if a one had seen it once it could have been forgotten."

You won't mind if I don't tell will you," she asked. I can't believe that I'm really at ease an' I'm wondering how they got along. There seemed nothing for him to say so he said nothing.

Seven thirty," she said finally glancing at her watch. That is the time set. She began to draw on her gloves, and he wondered as he waited for change what another man would do in his place, and what the whole thing meant. But she was ahead of him at the door and jumped out a waiting cab. That was why he sought his friend and took a drink. He had heard of people looking out for persons after having an adventure, so he took to watching. It came at last and made him gasp. "The Purple Poppy wants to explain the wretched mistake she made to the friend with big C on the silver knob." He lost no time in writing to the address given, and soon received his explanation. The Purple Poppy's sister was eloping with a friend of the man the Purple Poppy thought she was having tea with. It was a sad affair, as her sister's sweetheart had almost killed their guardian in a rage, and was wanted in case he died. They had arranged to lead the detectives off the track by having the Purple Poppy put on her sister's clothes and meet the sweetheart's friend and seem to arrange a meeting, the cab being intended to lead the detectives a chase while the real girl went to her sweetheart and took the train with him. It had worked all right except for her foolish mistake, and now that the guardian was out of danger, the newly wedded couple were getting settled in a cozy little apartment where they would be glad to welcome their deliverer as they were pleased to call Roger Camp, for the real friend had been unable to keep the appointment made for him, and goodness only knows what would have happened if Roger Camp had not followed the lead of the Purple Poppy.

He accepted the invitation and continued to follow the lead already established until it brought him face to face with the solution of the whole puzzle of existence.

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