

# "Old Curmudgeon"

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN

Belle Hinckley was an orphan with a fortune.

While she was abroad her guardian trustee had certain property she owned, the family homestead, could be made valuable for a certain purpose if there were more of it. If the adjoining place could be united with it there would be ample room. Perhaps the union could be effected.

Belle had been abroad two years when this announcement reached her and would receive her property in a few months. She resolved to return to America and look into the matter for herself. On her arrival she learned that the purpose for which the property was wanted was a large manufacturing plant. Those about to establish it had tried to buy the adjoining property, but had failed. After her departure for Europe a man had bought it who wouldn't sell. Belle, who had inherited a business head from her father, saw that he was making a mistake that would involve her as well as himself.

The morning after her arrival she went to the adjoining place to see "Old Wilkinson," as he was called, and try to induce him to sell. As she went up the walk to the house a young man came out to the porch and stood with his hands in his pockets watching the approaching girl.

"Is Mr. Wilkinson in?" she asked.

"No, he is not."

"Can you tell me where I can see him?"

"It is uncertain. Can I be of service to you?"

"I wish to see him with regard to selling his property to the Excelsior Electric works. I own the next place and am interested. The company will not buy unless it can have both places."

"Come in," said the young man, and led the way into the drawing room. He said he could represent the matter to the owner of the property and invited her to state her case. This she did remarkably well, the young man listening attentively, though he seemed to be so wrapped in admiration of Miss Hinckley that she doubted if he took in all she said. However, after she had finished he promised to represent the matter to the owner in a favorable light. Then he invited her to inspect the place, taking her into the greenhouses and presenting her with some fine American Beauty roses. When she departed he said that as soon as he had anything to report he would call upon her.

Mr. Alexander—that was his name—called two days later and said that while he had represented the matter as she had given it to him, the owner was still averse to selling. Miss Hinckley asked the young man what reasons had been given for the refusal and was told that no reason whatever had been advanced. He suspected that the owner wished to build on the property himself, or possibly he might be negotiating with other parties.

Belle was very much disappointed. She told the gentleman that but few concerns had the means to purchase so large a property and if the opportunity were not taken advantage of both places would remain as they were producing no income and paying taxes that would gradually eat them up. The young man said that he would again confer with the owner and endeavor to impress him with this view of the case.

In a few days Mr. Alexander called again to report that he had failed to impress the owner of the property with the reasons Miss Hinckley had advanced and feared that he had other views for the property. The matter dragged along. The would-be purchasers were known to be looking at other sites, and Miss Hinckley was discouraged.

"The only way I know for you to move the old curmudgeon," said Mr. Alexander one day to Belle, "is to marry him. When you have done that you can make him do what you like."

Belle scouted the idea. Indeed, she had taken quite a fancy to this Mr. Alexander, but anyway she wouldn't marry an old man, especially a stubborn one. But she thought of the water and concluded that she would look the old chap over. Alexander agreed to arrange a meeting, but when he admitted that he could not do so except at the beginning of a matrimonial negotiation Belle balked again; but, receiving an advance on the offer for her property conditional on the purchase of the adjoining estate, she consented. It was arranged that she go the next day to make the call, Mr. Wilkinson having an attack of gout which kept him off his feet.

Miss Hinckley was received at the door by a servant and ushered into the library, where she saw Mr. Alexander sitting in an easy chair with a leg stretched out on a foot rest. But he rose without difficulty and said:

"I am the owner of this property having bought it the day before your first call here. If you wish me to join you in effecting a sale to these electric men you will have first to promise to marry me. I have got another bid for both places and can make these parties to whom you wish to sell pay double the amount they have offered, for they must have the site."

Miss Hinckley was quite ready to make the promise, and both dealt, went through readily.

Mrs. Alexander facetiously calls her husband "Old Curmudgeon."

# An Education From a Nibbel

A young girl who lived in Mississippi asked her brother to give her the money to go to college. He told her he could not afford it and, tossing her a nickel, added: "Unless you can go on that."

The plucky girl took the five cent piece and bought some calico, from which she made a bonnet that she sold for 25 cents. With this money she bought more calico and made more bonnets. In this way she determined to raise potatoes. She did all the work in the field except the plowing. The venture was a success, and she had enough money to start at school. She did not stop work, however, and it is not surprising that a girl of so much determination was able to borrow enough money to supplement what she made.

She was graduated with honor from the State College For Women, attended a medical school, still earning all her expenses, got her degree and is now a successful practicing physician in a large town in the south, and it all began with a nickel—Youth's Companion.

# A Breach of Promise Case

By DWIGHT NORWOOD

While talking with Farmer Beasley a young woman in widow's weeds came tripping along the road.

"Good morning, Mr. Beasley," she said cheerily.

"Morning, Mrs. Chambers," replied Beasley.

"What a pretty woman," I remarked, "and what a pleasant smile!"

"Well, rather," said Beasley. "That smile is capable of bowling over a bull regiment of men."

"How does she do it?"

"Just smiles at 'em; that's all she does. She don't appear to give 'em no encouragement, though Ed Stumps declared she give him a lot of it. He come to me not long after she lighted here and told me that he was going to sue her for breach of promise. I told him not to make a fool of himself, but he wouldn't listen to me and went down to the county seat and put the case in the hands of an attorney."

"First time I met the widdler after Stumps sued her for blighted affections I reckoned when I seen her comin' that she'd look kind of nervous, but she didn't. I said good mornin' to her and asked her how her suit was comin' on, and she said it was interestin'. The women generally sued the men for breach of promise, and she reckoned she was the only woman in the state that had ever been complimented that way."

"By cracker! She seemed to be proud of it. I asked her if she wasn't afraid of havin' to pay a big sum, and she said she'd be very much mortified if the jury stuck her for a little one. Funny creatures, women, aren't they?"

"When the trial come around I went down to the courthouse. She was there takin' care of her own case. She examined the men summoned for jurors herself, and you'd ought to heard the questions she asked. It was like this: 'Are you married or single, Mr. Jones? (with that smile o' her'n). Oh, a bachelor, eh? Were you ever in love, Mr. Jones? Have you a proper reverence for our sect? Do you think that if you were jilted you'd consider money an equivalent for your broken heart? Mr. Smith, you say you are married. Happy match? Does your wife ever get jealous? How much do you think would have repaid you if she had refused to marry you after you had courted her?' And all the time she was talkin' 'jest not there and smilin', showin' her white teeth between her rosy lips. Some on 'em she turned down, and some on 'em she let through, but she didn't take any time about it, which ever way she decided. Nobody could tell from her questions whether she was going to turn a man down or let him on to the jury."

"When the twelve jurymen were ready for work they was the most self-satisfied lot of men I ever see, together. They all settled themselves down in their chairs as if they was goin' to have the time of their lives. The judge, he looked cheerful too. The plaintiff's counsel apologized to the defendant, but conscientiously worked for his client. Whenever he said anything about the widdler's rosin him she just laughed as though she thought it very funny. And when he read some soft sologer she had written the plaintiff she sat lookin' at the jurymen with that smile o' her'n on her lips, and it seemed to me that every one of 'em couldn't help thinkin' that she was sayin' it to him specially."

"When the lawyer got through the widdler arose to make her defense. 'May I please the court, and she smiled at the judge. When she said 'Gentlemen of the jury' she spoke the word gentlemen as though every one on 'em had been born in an alabaster palace with jeweled doors and windows. She said she'd have to throw herself on the court's mercy, because Mr. Stumps was no nice to her, she just couldn't help sayin' nice things to him too. She was awful sorry about it all and really thought he ought to have a considerable verdict. In fact, if she'd been rich she'd 'a' paid him a large sum, seein' she couldn't love him, without compellin' him to take his case into court."

"Reckon this puzzled the jury some. They didn't seem to know which way to bring in the case to the widdler's satisfaction. If they allowed Stumps the \$20,000 damages—she claimed the widdler would have to pay it. If they found for him with a few cents damages it wouldn't be complimentary to the widdler. So when the judge gave 'em the case they retired to the jury room to talk it over. They all agreed in favor of the defendant, but didn't know how to favor her most. At last one on 'em, an oldish married man, hit the nail on the head, and they all went back into the courtroom feelin' first rate."

"Your honor, said the foreman, 'we've found for the plaintiff with \$100,000 damages, but owing to exceptional circumstances recommend the defendant to marry.'"

"The recommend was all the judge wanted. He remitted the damages and discharged the defendant with the injunction that she git married and stop stirrin' up the men."

"Some says she's goin' to take the judge at his word. Anyway, he's been courtin' the widdler ever since. But you never kin tell about what widdlers are goin' to do."

# Significance of Little Things

We love little things, we hate little things, we fear little things. Our lives are knit up with little things from the time we are born to the day we die.

Big things draw us up to heaven or crush us down to hell. Little things live beside us on the earth, and when we catch the early trails with us or make us miss it, irritate and appease us—never leave us alone for a minute. That is why they are so much more important than the big things—the things that come only once in a way, at long intervals, and then are nearly always the result of a hundred and one little things combined.

To be crushed by a large misadventure is natural, but to fall a victim to a series of petty misfortunes is humiliating. There are many who would prefer to break their necks once and for all by falling off a mountain than to bruise their whole bodies and dislocate their tempers by the daily stumbling over a molehill. It is the little things that count. The satisfaction of climbing Mount Olympus is a poor sort of attainment if the secure and scores of pleasant details which wait upon success be absent.—Atlantic.

# Strange Facts About Sleep

No scientist can explain what sleep really is. Most human beings sleep on their sides with the knees drawn up; elephants always and horses commonly sleep standing up. But sleep is bed downward, hanging by their hind legs. Birds, with the exception of owls and the hanging parrots of India, sleep with their heads turned tailward with the neck and the back thrust among the feathers between the wing and body. Ducks, gulls and other long-legged birds sleep standing on one leg. Ducks sleep on open water. To avoid drifting shoreward they keep paddling with one foot, thus making them waddle in a circle. Birds sleep hanging by their four feet, the head tucked in between their fore legs. Foxes and wolves sleep curled up, their noses and the soles of their feet closed together and blanketed by their bushy tails. Hares, rabbits and fishes sleep with their eyes wide open. Owls, in addition to their eyelids, have a screen that they draw sideways across their eyes to shut out the light, for they sleep in the daytime. No one knows whether insects sleep or not. Man is the only animal that ever sleeps on its back.—New York Worker.

# He Capitulated

His wife met him at the door. His dinner had been waiting for thirty minutes, but she was smiling sweetly. Her hair was done up in a becoming style, and she looked ten years younger than usual.

She put her arms around his neck, drew his head down and kissed him sweetly.

"Give me your hat and coat," she said. "I will hang them away for you. I can see that you are tired. Have you had a hard day at the office, dear?"

"Yes," he replied. "I'm all figured out."

"I'm sorry. But never mind. I feel sure that things will take a turn for the better soon. I've got a surprise for you—the maid has prepared a nice chicken stew, the kind you like so well. Shall I run upstairs and get your slippers?"

"Never mind, little woman," he replied, pushing his hand into his pocket. "How much do you want?"—Chicago Record-Herald.

# A Case of Blackmail

By WILLIAM CHANDLER

The blings of that part of my case which were covered forward the office in which to write some business letters in which to cover the points of the screwdriver on a certain part of the desk which I had supposed was solid, and so low a little drawer. I had owned that desk for years and never without being aware of this secret drawer. Naturally I was astonished. There were several papers in it which I removed and examined. I fancied that they all related to the same subject, though this was guesswork. One was plain enough to be understood by any one. It was a demand for \$10,000 or the case gone before the district attorney. It was in an envelope addressed to Samuel S. Henderson and was signed with the initials "J. M."

"Through a friend in the real estate business I learned the following facts: The house at which I had bought the desk had belonged to Samuel S. Henderson, to whom the name was transferred."

Henderson had died in a sudden death shortly before the sale of the house, and property amounting to several hundred thousand dollars which he was supposed to have possessed was nowhere to be found. His house and furniture were sold by his widow and a daughter, their only child, and the mother was dead, but the property was living on the money received, and due from the amount realized from the sale.

One morning I called on Mrs. Henderson and asked her if she knew of any one who had had any dealings with her father whose initials were J. M. She thought for some time, but could recall no such person. I asked her if she had any of her father's papers, and she said she had a bundle of them that had been removed from the desk before it was sold. I asked her to examine them and to see if she knew of any one who had a name on any of them that would fit the initials. She looked through them and—

One evening when I called on Mrs. Henderson and asked her if she knew of any one who had a name on any of them that would fit the initials, she looked through them and—

I began a still later for James Henderson and after waiting the passage of that name in the directory, which made it but one James Henderson, I investigated and found to be a man living in excellent style. I wrote him a note stating that I had come into possession of a note of his to the late Samuel Henderson. If he would call on me about it I would be pleased to call on him. I received a reply saying that he did not understand what I meant, but he would be at home the next day at a certain hour.

I found Mr. Henderson to be a man of address, with a very disagreeable expression on his face. He undertook to bluff me by following me up at my note and demanded that I should tell him the contents of the letter I had found, how I came by it, etc.

"Mr. Murphy, it is evident that you were keying blackmail upon Mr. Henderson. I have become interested in the matter. Mr. Henderson is a man and no secret—you had better get out of his hands. It is quite simple, your threats were the cause of his death. You have got right amounts he paid you, and the money comes for you in return, and the book has been found having a check every check paid you, Charles Henderson retaining the money and not accounting for blackmail and his life. Some standing with the desk for you without a legal title. Mr. Murphy had been aware of his face and started it not knowing what really really he said.

"I had a partner who named and he happened to give me a little money. I had a way out of the moon the next day, would be shocked to see that he had no stock in it, and he was really a millionaire.

\$175,000 which was proved, the had paid him, the fact that he of money out of held them. He secret he had admitted it that, would of different.

When I was had a fortune, news with not understand her father's death. Very soon after that I was giving my

# Two Wins and a Street

Craven street, Strand, London, once produced quite a competition among epigrammatists. James Smith, one of the authors of the "Rejected Addresses," who died there in 1899, wrote:

In Craven street, Strand, ten attorneys find place. And ten dark oval bargons are moored at its base. Fly, honestly, fly; seek some safer retreat. For there's craft on the river and craft on the street. To which Mr. George Rose retorted: Why should honesty fly to some safer retreat. From attorneys and bargons, 'od 'od' For the lawyers are just at the top of the street. And the bargons are just at the bottom.

# The Finest Speech in English

The finest speech in English of the last half-century was delivered at Gettysburg—a speech made by a man who had been a country farmer and a district lawyer—which ranks among the glories and the treasures of mankind. It is a masterpiece of British eloquence by awarding the prize to Abraham Lincoln—Lord Curzon at Cambridge University.

# A Practical Woman

Our idea of a practical woman is one who can get as much pleasure out of changing the chignon to where the dresser stood and the dresser to where the chignon stood as she would find in buying a new rug for the dining room.—Galveston News.

# The Terrible

Men live faster than women. When we married, at the age of twenty-three, our wife was twenty-two. That was eighteen years ago, and we are now forty-one. Our wife, however, has not yet reached twenty-seven.—Cincinnati-Schmitt.

# A Source of Supply Gone

Bob—Ain't it awful that Dick is going to get married? Jack—What's awful about it? Bob—Why, Dick was such an easy guy to borrow money from.—Puck.

# In a Bad Way

Fond Parent: Do you think I ought to have my daughters' voices cultivated? Absentminded Visitor—I should think you ought to have something done for it!

# The Wind and Waves are Always on the Side of the Ablest Navigator

Chandler

# Why He Didn't Sleep

Doctor to patient, a sufferer, suffering from insomnia: Well, how did you sleep last night? Did you follow my instructions, and recall all the strokes of your last word? Patient: Yes, Doctor. And then you fell asleep? Doctor: No, then it was time to get up!

# Thy Mother's Love

One lamp, thy mother's love, amid the stars shall lift its pure flame changeless, and before the throne of God burn through eternity, holy, as it was lit and lent thee here.—Willis.

# Vicious

Molly—So you are really engaged at last? I'm awfully glad to hear it, dear! Angelina—Yes, I was sure you would be; you may have a chance now!

# Truth may work mightily, though in the hand of the sorriest instrument

Schiller

# The Victoria Cross

England's prided Victoria Cross is only won under circumstances of the deadliest peril to its owner. The cross itself is of bronze, cast from cannon taken at Sebastopol inscribed with the words, "For Valour." It is the proudest decoration a British subject can wear. The Duke of Newcastle, secretary of state for war in 1845, is credited with having originated the idea of the cross after the Alma, being anxious to institute an English order which all ranks might win and be proud to wear, like the French Legion of Honor. The cross confers on all below commissioned rank an annuity of \$50.

# Billiard Cues

Billiard cues are made of ash, with usually a lighter wood at the handle. A good one should balance if a man's finger be placed under the middle of it, and as it tapers the butt must be of lighter wood than the shaft. But there is a vast amount of individuality in cues. The making of leather billiard cue tips has been an industry of a particular class of French peasants time out of mind.—Washington Star.

# Plaster of Paris

When mixing plaster of paris for mending cracks in plaster use vinegar instead of water. It should be of the consistency of putty, and when the cracks are filled the top should be smoothed over with a knife. The mixture will not harden for about half an hour.

# Cause and Effect

Comedian: I say, old chap, your nose and chin will light ere long; they approach each other very menacingly. Old Actor: I'm afraid so, my dear, for a great many words have passed between them already.—London Telegraph.

# Florida's Tip

Mount Pleasant, Fla., is probably the smallest mountain in the country. It is only 301 feet above sea level and is the highest determined point in the state.

# Couldn't

She—What was the doctor's diagnosis? He—Palpitation of the heart. She—Well, why doesn't he keep away from her?—Judge.