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A Plebeian Son

His High Bred Wife Made Him Over

By F. A. MITCHEL

Edward Schenk one morning, with carpetbag in hand, bid his old father and mother goodby. He was going to leave the little shack in which he had been born and had lived for seventeen years. He was going to the city to make his fortune. And he was likely to succeed in doing so, for he had in him the principle of bringing every thing to his own advantage. He was a natural trader, and in every trade he made there was a margin of profit for him. One of his boyish transactions was this: He traded a jackknife he owned for a more elaborate one which was rusty and dull. Taking off the rust, sharpening the blades and polishing up the handle, he traded it for a better one with one of his blades broken. The broken blade he filed into a nail cleaner and traded the knife for another, receiving 25 cents to boot. The knife he now owned he put up at a raffle, charging 10 cents a chance. The result was that the original knife, which was worth little or nothing, had been metamorphosed into \$3.25. The boy who won it paid very nearly what it was worth, and the boys who did not win it contributed to the trader's juvenile fortune.

When Schenk reached the city he had \$100 that had grown out of jackknives, tops, marbles, children's wagons that he had manufactured himself and other articles in which he had dealt. He hired himself to a junk dealer, and, selecting different articles that he found in stock, he repaired them and sold them for more than they were worth, turning in to his employer the price they would ordinarily have brought.

Schenk grew rich. No sooner had he climbed the dollar ladder than he wished to climb the social ladder. He sat by day, immaculately dressed, in a beautifully furnished office at a rosewood desk, with clerks and office boys at his call. He put men who were members of different clubs under obligations to him, then asked them to propose him for membership. Unconsciously he had done business in a small way in his own name and was remembered by some as Schenk the Junkman. This kept him out of several of the best clubs, but he was admitted to the rest and in time became a member of those that had turned him down.

By a similar process he worked his way into a dancing club called the Carpet Beaters. He had never beaten carpets, but he had done work equally mental. Consequently he disliked the name of the club and wondered how the managers could have selected it, forgetting that they were so far removed from the class who really beat carpets that they were not at all sensitive in the matter.

By this time, like one of the jackknives that had been the beginning of his fortune, Schenk had been so furnished as to have value in the matrimonial market. Mothers urged their daughters to set their caps for him. But the daughters demurred. If the odor of the junk shop did not still hang about him there was a certain cheapness that, like certain rust spots on his juvenile jackknives, could not be rubbed out. But he was capable of ending up as snubbing from certain ladies who were to the man born and contented himself with being endured by others who were not "first water" or whose mothers had an eye on his fortune.

He finally succeeded in the matrimonial market, as he had succeeded in the commercial markets—that is, by giving an inferior for a superior article. Miss Celia Evans, the daughter of a retired parents, consented to marry him because he had helped her father out of a commercial hole. It was supposed at the time that he had done what he did from a kindness of heart, but he made a fair profit out of the transaction.

Celia was told of Schenk's maxims and after that accepted attentions from him which she had previously denied him with a falsely good grace. He wanted her, and the assistance he had rendered her father had been a part of a plan he had laid to win her. That a pecuniary profit had stuck to his magnetic fingers was simply owing to their attraction for the precious metals. He stuck to the girl till urged by her parents, she consented to marry him.

And now that Mr. Schenk was about to make another round in the social ladder a matter came up of an embarrassing nature. Matrimony is a junction of families. This junction may be put aside in all ways but one. Every child born to the married pair derives its being from each and both families. It is natural, therefore, that when two persons are about to be married there should be introductions between their respective near blood relations.

The embarrassing feature in Schenk's case was that his father and mother had continued to live in the shack where he had left them; and there had been no more change in them than in the shack. The only change in each being that the shack had become dilapidated and the couple had grown old. Their son Edward while laying the foundation of his fortune had left them to shift for themselves, and by the time he had money to spare their necessities

had been lopped off by age, the seasons for enjoyment having passed. Therefore when he wrote asking if there was anything he could do for them they replied that the only thing needed was some tobacco for the old man's pipe, the tobacco to be had at the country store being mixed with cornhusks and hard on his throat, which was weak. Edward sent the tobacco of medium grade, for he argued that since his father would not appreciate an expensive smoke, to pay a high price would be a waste of money. But he did not visit his parents.

From this brief family statement it may be guessed that the parentage question on Schenk's side was, to say the least, embarrassing. Notwithstanding all his ability for getting on in the world he was stalled at this apparently trivial problem. He solved it temporarily by telling his fiancée that his father and mother were old and infirm and were on this account incapacitated from taking part in their son's wedding festivities. It was evident from this that the couple would add nothing to the elation of the occasion, though Schenk had given the impression that they were living surrounded by every comfort. This was true, since what would be a comfort to them would be a hardship to another. Edward asked his mother to write a few lines to his bride, but they were so badly written and spelled that he did not show them to Celia, saying that his mother would have written had she not been prevented by palsy.

There was a large wedding—it would have been larger if the groom had had his way—after which was the usual bridal journey. Mrs. Schenk suggested that they visit her husband's parents since the poor old couple could not visit them, but Schenk demurred, giving as an excuse that they were both ill and a visit would be a discomfort to them.

Several years passed, during which time Schenk by various excuses kept his wife away from his parents. Then one spring Mrs. Schenk took it into her head that she would like a house in the country for the summer. Schenk had thus far had no use for a country residence, so not owning one he told his wife that she might rent one wherever she chose. Seeing an advertisement of a place some fifty miles distant from the city, the description of which pleased her, she ordered out her car and went to inspect it. Being much pleased with the place and since her husband would go and come to and from business every day either by train or auto she rented it.

One evening after business hours the couple started by automobile for their country residence. They had not gone far before Schenk found himself moving toward the "stables" of his boyhood. But he said nothing, trusting that they would soon turn in another direction. Another ten miles and another ten and still they remained on the very road he had trudged some fifteen years before to make his fortune in the city. Here and there he recognized points where he had stopped to rest, and on a rock beside a creek he had stopped to eat the dinner his mother had made up for him. But when the car left the main road for a smaller one that led past the house in which he was born and where dwelt his aged parents a cold sweat began to gather on his brow. He was relieved, however, when another turn was made, and after following a new road up a declivity they entered a noble place that was to be their home for the summer. Schenk had hunted woodcock on that hill when a boy and knew that it was not more than a mile from his father's shack.

The pair dined and the next morning Schenk returned to the city as little as possible and hoping that the end of the summer might come without his wife's meeting his parents. Various excuses kept him in the city most of the time till September, when he joined Mrs. Schenk for the last time, the country before their removal to town.

"Edward," said Mrs. Schenk, "I was out motoring the other day and stopped at a little hut for a drink of water. It was handed me by an old woman, who asked from what city I hailed. When I told her she said her son had gone there years ago to make his fortune. She said his name was Edward and the family name was Schenk. Isn't it an odd coincidence that the name of this boy and yours should be the same?"

"Very," said Schenk, looking in every direction except at his wife, and making a trivial excuse, he left the room.

A few days later the couple entered their limousine to go to the city. A lackey carried out a large bundle.

"What's that?" asked Schenk.

"Some castoff clothing I'm going to take to the poor old Schenk couple. We'll drive past the house with it."

Schenk stood aghast.

"Do you think we have time?" he stammered. "Why not let James take it there?"

"Because I wish to take it myself."

There was something so positive in this reply that Schenk could interpose no further objection. One faint hope was within him—that his parents might not recognize him.

When they pulled up in front of the shack the old couple came out and stood looking at them, with the sun obscuring their vision.

"I have brought you some nice things," said Mrs. Schenk, "but the nicest of all is your son. He has been busy making a fortune since he left you, and that is very absorbing. But he is going now to make amends for his neglect."

Schenk sat rigid for a few moments, then threw his arms around his wife's neck. Then he jumped out of the car and embraced first his father, then his mother.

From that day he was a changed man.

TODAY IS YOURS.

Prize It, For Yesterday is Gone and Tomorrow May Never Come.

The best thing you have in this world is today. Here it is, a wonderful treasure, a marvelous jewel. It's yours; all yours. It's in your hands. What are you going to do with it?

Today you can be happy, not yesterday nor tomorrow. There is no happiness except today's.

Most of our misery is left over from yesterday or borrowed from tomorrow. Keep today clean. Make up your mind to enjoy your food, your work, your play, today anyhow.

Time is not divided into three parts, past, present and future. There is only one real-time—it is now.

You can do anything if you'll only go at it a day at a time.

Don't let life pass against you. Attack it in detail and you can easily triumph.

"Oh, but I can't help thinking of the past! And one must plan for the future."

To be sure; only forget not that it is not the past that determines the present; it is the present that determines the past.

The past is what we make of it. It is the temper of the present that qualifies it. It all depends upon how you now consider it, whether it brings you despair or encouragement.

Suck out its wisdom, keep its lessons, utilize its experience, make of all those things elements of present power. But forget its septic qualities. Don't let the past unman you, benumb you with remorse, weaken you with self-contempt.

The poet says we rise by stepping on our dead selves, and, as for the future, the best preparation for it is an unafraid today.

Whatever hills you have to climb, whatever bridges you have to cross, whatever enemies are lying in wait for you, whatever crises are to be met, you can be no better equipped for them than by living this day soundly, cheerfully and free from fear.

Apprehensions, premonitions, worries, these are the poison gases of our foe, the future.

If you are to die tomorrow the best way to be ready is to discharge faithfully today's duties and to enjoy heartily today's simple pleasures.

Today is yours. God has given it to you. All your yesterdays lie taken back. All your tomorrows are still in his hands.

Today is yours. Take its pleasures—and be glad. Take its pains—and play the man.

Today is yours, just a little strip of light between two darknesses, just a bit of life between two sleep deaths.

Today is yours. Use it so that at its close you can say:

"I have lived and loved today!"

Dr. Frank Crane in Pictorial Review.

Sentimental to Practical.

Young Man (over the counter)—If I should want to exchange this engagement ring for something else, it will be all right, won't it?

Jeweler—Oh, certainly! With pleasure. We are always glad to accommodate patrons.

Same Young Man (over the counter a year later)—I believe you told me when I bought this ring I could exchange it for something else?

Jeweler—Yes. What will you have?

Young Man—Well, I'd like to exchange it for a barrel of flour, a bushel of potatoes, a ham and a load of coal.—Exchange.

Official Condition.

A few years ago a collector of antiquities arrived at the Belgian frontier with an Egyptian mummy. He was told that duty would have to be paid on it, but the tariff list being consulted, mummies were not found classified.

"Declare it as salt fish," said the official to one of the clerks, and thus the desecrated remains of a possible Pharaoh made its triumphal entry into Belgium.—Boston Transcript.

Where He Was Weak.

"You say, Mr. Smith," said the girl in a low, thoughtful, this is a serious matter sort of tone, "that you have loved me for five years and have never dared to tell me so until tonight?"

"Yes," he replied.

"Well, I cannot be your wife. A man who has no more courage than that would feign to be asleep while a burglar stole his baby's shoes."—Chicago Herald.

Tomboy.

Verstegan gives the following origin of the word "tomboy" as applied to romping girls: "Tombe, to dance, tumbled, danced; hence we yet call a wench that skipeth or leapeth like a boy; a tomboy; our name also of tumbling cometh from hence."

CURIOUS NAVAL ATTACK.

Some Queer Tasks to Which Warships Have Been Assigned.

Not all the tasks warships are called on to undertake have to do with war and the destruction of human life and property.

A couple of French warships were sent out into the Mediterranean some years ago to wage war against a school of porpoises which were doing an immense amount of damage to the fishing industry in those waters. After three days' hostilities, during which quick firing guns were used with considerable effect, the vessels returned to port triumphant, having practically annihilated the enemy.

A year or two ago a warship of Great Britain's Australian fleet was given the strange job of capturing or destroying a mysterious sea monster which had been reported off the Falkland islands, the scene of the recent German naval defeat.

It is pretty safe to say that the officers, if not the crew, entertained grave doubts of the actual existence of the frightful creature which had been described. It was too terrifying, hideous, gigantic and ferocious.

But shortly after the ship arrived in the waters where the monster was supposed to lie in wait for vessels the officer of the watch described a strange looking beast making toward his ship, and it was immediately guessed that this must be the substance of all the alarming tales. And a pretty good substance it proved to be.

An attack was made upon it, and after some hours' fighting with harpoons and quick firing guns the mysterious monster, which proved to be a sea elephant between thirteen and fourteen yards long, was slaughtered and taken aboard.

Some years ago the Norwegian government sent out a powerful little fleet of warships armed with mines, torpedoes and quick firing guns to exterminate a vast horde of seals which was denuding the sea on the northwest coast of all fish life.

But the government had reckoned upon tens of thousands of seals, whereas there were millions. So unending was their number that the fleet had eventually to admit itself defeated, with the loss of one man and two slightly wounded owing to an accident and to "retire in order," having exhausted its entire supply of ammunition.—New York American.

Irritation and Pain.

A sharp distinction should be drawn between irritation and pain. Irritation is not pain, but only a frequent cause of it. Thus a crumb lodged in the larynx near the vocal cords produces violent irritation and prolonged coughing, which often results in actual pain. So, too, a speck of dust in the eye sets up violent irritation and inflammation, followed by actual pain. Of the surface of the body the finger tips and the end of the tongue are most sensitive—for instance, a burn on the fingers is much more painful than one on the back would be, while one on the tongue would be more painful still. Deep wounds are not painful, as a rule, save as regards the surface injury.

The King Snake.

To the rattlesnake and to every other dangerous snake, large or small, the king snake is a terror. The poison of a rattler has no more effect on him than so much moonshine. Instinctively the rattler knows his match and at sight of a king snake tries to escape if possible. In fight the king snake relies wholly upon his incredible speed. If the movements of an ordinary snake seem quick to the human eye, the movements of a king snake would seem instantaneous. In a twinkling the long, lank throw of an antagonist and his snowy coils closing about the other's throat, chokes the wind out of him.

The Rose in Ancient Days.

Old Greek writers extol the rose above all other flowers. The Romans appreciated this flower equally as much as the Greeks, and, according to Athenaeus, Cleopatra had the floor covered with roses a foot and a half thick, and Nero is recorded as having spent some thousands of pounds in roses at one feast alone. Anacreon relates how the breath of roses used to perfume the bow of Olympus, and the Graces loved to twine themselves together by a band of these queenly flowers.

Accidental Discharge of a Gun.

A capital pun may arise by pure accident, as recorded in Bucke's "Book of Table Talk."

"A Mr. Alexander Gun was dismissed from a post in the customs of Edinburgh for circulating some false rumor. The dismissal is said to have been thus noted in the customs book at the time, 'A. Gun discharged for making a false report.'"