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GREENSBORO, N. C. CONYER, N. Y.

Vaseline
PETROLEUM JELLY



CHAPTER XIV—Continued.

"Never thought of it," replied Bronson. "I hadn't had the phone only a few years. Drive faster."

"I want to get there, or I would," answered the doctor. "Don't worry. From what your wife told me over the phone I don't believe the boys' entry is more strenuous than I have—and probably not so much."

"He was alive, then?"

"Alive and making an argument against taking the emetic," replied the doctor. "But I guess she got it down him."

Thus reassured, Mr. Bronson was calm, even if somewhat tragic in countenance, when he entered the death chamber with the doctor. Newton was lying on his back, and his eyes were open. His mother had won the argument, and Newton had lost his dinner. Hankon Peterson occupied an armchair.

"What's all this?" asked the doctor. "How are you feeling, Newt? Any pain?"

"I'm all right," said Newton. "Don't give me any more of that nasty stuff!"

"No," said the doctor, "but if you don't tell me what you've been eating, and doing, and pulling off, in a while, I'll use this—and the doctor exhibited a huge stomach pump."

"What'll you do with that?" asked Newton.

"I'll put this down into your hand, and unload you, that's what I'll do."

"Is the election over, Mr. Peterson?" asked Newton.

"Yes," answered Mr. Peterson, "and the winner is—"

"Who's elected?" asked Newton.

"Colonel Woodruff," answered Mr. Peterson. "The vote was twelve to eleven."

"I'm glad," said Newton. "I hope you'll be sore, but the only way I could see to get in half a vote for Colonel Woodruff was to get poisoned and send you after the doctor. If you'd done it would be a hell of a sight, and probably you'd be persuaded some body to change to Bonner. That's what's the matter with me. I killed your vote. Now you can do whatever you like to me—but I'm sorry I scared you."

Ezra Bronson seized Newton by the throat, but his fingers failed to close. "Don't pinch, dad," said Newton. "I've been using that neck an' it's tired."

Mr. Bronson dropped his hands to his sides, glared at his son for a moment and breathed a sigh of relief.

"Why, you damned infernal little fool," said he. "I've a notion to take a hamstringer to you! If I hadn't been the vote would have been eleven to thirteen!"

"There was plenty votes there for the colonel, if he needed 'em," said Hankon, whose politician's mind was fully on the subject of the changed conditions. "Any tank the Woodruff district will have a junctious school board from dis time on once more. Colonel Woodruff is just the man we have need of you there," said Bronson. "And as for you, young Jim, if one or both of them horses is hurt by the run I give them, I'll lick you within an inch of your life—Here comes Dilly driving an automobile, and he's got the right. I wouldn't want to drive a good team to death for any young hoodlum like him—All right, how much do I owe you, Doc?"

CHAPTER XV

The Glorious Fourth.

A good deal of water ran under the Woodruff district bridges in the weeks that followed the election and the Fourth of July picnic at Eight-Mile grove. But few surface indications there were of any change in the little community in this annual gathering of friends and neighbors. Wilbur Smythe, the main address, and was in a rather finer fettle than usual as he paid his fervid tribute to the starry flag, and to this very place as the most favored spot in the best county of the greatest state in the world, powerful, intellectual, freest and most progressive nation in the best possible of worlds.

Jim Irwin read the Declaration of Independence with the crowd, and, as she sat on the platform between Deacon Avery, the oldest settler in the district, and Mrs. Columbus Brown, the sole local representative of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Colonel Woodruff presided in his Grand Army of the Republic uniform.

The fresh northwest breeze made free with the casks, elms, hickories and box elders of Eight-Mile grove, and the waters of Pleasant Lake scattered a hundred yards away, beyond the fitting figures of the boys who preferred to shoot off their own firecrackers and torpedoes and allegor-chasers, rather than listen to those of Wilbur Smythe. Still farther off could be heard the voice of a loud lemonade vender as he advertised ice-cold lemonade, made in the shade, with a brand-new spade, by an old maid, as a guaranty that it was the blindest, coldest lemonade ever brewed.

Under the shadiest trees a few incorrigible Marthas were spreading the snowy tablecloths on which would soon be placed the beautiful repasts stored in ponderous hickory baskets and hampers. It was a lovely day, in a lovely spot—a good example of the unshatterable forests which grew naturally from time immemorial in favored locations on the lower prairie—half a square mile of wooded hill about which the green corn rows stood aslant in the cool breeze, waist-high and laid by.

They were passing down the rough board steps from the platform after the exercises had terminated in a rousing rendition of "America," when Jennie Woodruff, having slipped by everybody else to reach him, tapped Jim Irwin on the arm. He looked back at her over his shoulder with his slow gentle smile.

"Isn't your mother here, Jim?" she asked. "I've been looking all over the crowd and can't see her."

"She's not here," answered Jim. "I was in hopes that when she broke loose and went to your Christmas dinner she would stay, loose—but she went home and settled back into her rut."

"Too bad," said Jennie. "She'd have had a nice time if she had come."

"Yes," said Jim. "I believe she would."

"I want help," said Jennie. "Our hamper is terribly heavy. Please!"

It was rather obvious to Mrs. Elymer that Jennie was throwing herself at Jim's head, but that was an article of the Bonner family creed since the decision which closed the hearing in the court house. It must be admitted that the young county superintendent found tasks which kept the schoolmaster very close to her side.

"Sit down, Jim," said Mrs. Woodruff, "you've earned a bite of what we've got."

"I'm sorry," said Jim, "but I've a prior engagement."

got. It's good enough, what there is of it, and there's enough of it, such as it is."

"I'm sorry," said Jim, "but I've a prior engagement."

"Why, Jim!" protested Jennie. "I've been counting on you. Don't desert me!"

"I'm awfully sorry," said Jim. "I promised. I'll see you later."

One might have judged, judging by the colonel's quizzical smile, that he was pleased at Jennie's loss of her former ally.

"We'll have to invite him, longer ahead of time," said he. "He's getting to be in demand."

Jim seemed to be in demand—a fact that Jennie was not so much surprised by. He received a dozen invitations as he passed the groups seated on the grass—one of them from Mrs. Cornelius Bonner, who saw no particular point in advertising disgraceful conduct. The children ran to him and clung to his hands; young girls gave him sisterly smiles and such trifles as chicken drumsticks, pieces of cake and like tidbits. His passage to the numerous groups at a glance made under a big burr oak was quite an ovation—an ovation of the significance of which he was himself quite unaware.

But Jennie—the daughter of a politician—was not so much surprised. She remembered the fact that Jim Irwin had won something from the people of the Woodruff district in the way of deference. Still he was the gangling, lincobian, ill-dressed, overcastigated Jim Irwin of old, but Jennie had no longer the feeling that one's standing was somewhat compromised by association with him.

He had begun to put on something more dignified, and clothes, something which he had possessed all the time, but which became valid only as it was publicly apprehended. It was clearly the central figure of his group, in which she recognized the presence of those queer children from Tennessee, the Simmeses, the Talcoits, the Hansens, the Hamms and Colonel Wood-

son's hired man, Pete, whose other name is not recorded.

Jim sat down between Bettina Hansen, a flaxen-haired young Brumblide of seventeen, and Callista Simms—Jennie saw him do it, while listening to Wilbur Smythe's account of the exciting nature of the big law practice he was building up—and would have been glad to exchange places with Bettina.

The repast drew to a close, and over by the burr oak the crowd had grown to a circle surrounding Jim Irwin.

"He seems to be making an address," said Wilbur Smythe.

"Well, Wilbur," replied the colonel, "you had the first shot at us. Suppose we move over—and see what's under discussion."

As they approached the group, they heard Jim Irwin answering something which Ezra Bronson had said.

"You think so, Ezra," said he, "and it seems reasonable that big creamers like those at Omaha, Sioux City, Des Moines and the other centralizer points can make butter cheaper than we would do here, but you've the figures that show that they aren't economical."

"They can't make good butter, for one thing," said Newton Bronson cockily.

"Why can't they?" asked Old Hansen, the father of Bettina.

"Well," said Newton, "they have to have so much cream that they've got to slip it so far that it gets rotten on the way; and they have to reconstitute it with lime and other ingredients before they can churn it."

"Well," said Raymond Simms, "I reckon they sell their butter for 'all its worth, and they get it within four months to seven cents a pound as much for it as the farmers' creameries in Wisconsin and Minnesota get for theirs."

"That's a fact, Old," said Jim.

"How do you kids know so darned much about it?" queried Pete.

"I'm reading about it, and writing letters about it, and figuring percentages in school all winter. We've done arithmetic and geography and grammar and I don't know what else on it."

"Well, I'm agin' 'an schoolin'," said Pete, "that makes kids smarter in farms than their parents and their parents' hired men!"

"No, no," said Jim to his audience, "meanwhile pouring the lemonade, the centralizer creamery is uneconomical in several ways. It has to pay excessive transportation charges. It has to pay excessive commissions to its cream buyers. It has to accept cream without proper inspection, and mixes the good with the bad. It makes such long shipments that the cream spoils in transit and lowers the quality of the butter. It can't make the best use of the buttermilk. All these losses and leaks the farmers have to stand. I can prove—and so can the six or eight pupils in the Woodruff school who have been working on the cream question this winter—that we could make at least six cents a pound on our butter if we had a co-operative creamery and all sent our cream to it."

"Well," said Ezra Bronson, "let's start one."

"I'll go in," said Old Hansen.

"Me, too," said Col. Bonner.

There was a general chorus of assent. Jim had convinced his audience. "He's got the jury," said Wilbur Smythe to Colonel Woodruff.

"Yes," said the colonel, "and right here is where we're in danger. Can he handle the crowd when it's with him?"

"Well," said Jim, "I think we ought to organize one, but I've another proposition first. Let's get together and pool our cream. By that, I mean that we'll all sell to the same creamery, and get the best we can out of the centralizers by the co-operative method. We can save two cents a pound in that way, and I'll learn to co-operate. When we have found just how well we can bang together, we'll be able to take up the co-operative creamery with less danger of falling apart and falling."

"We'll handle the pool?" inquired Mr. Hansen.

"I'll handle it to the school," answered Jim.

"School's about done," objected Mr. Bronson.

"Won't the cream pool pretty near pay the expenses of running the school all summer?" asked Bonner.

"We ought to run the school plant by the time we get the cream pool way to get full value of the investment. And we've corn-club work, pig-club work, poultry work and canning-club work which make it very desirable to keep in session with only a few cents' vacation. If you'll add the cream pool, it will make the school the hardest working crowd in the district and doing actual farm work, too."

"I like Mr. Bonner's suggestion," said Wilbur Smythe. "I've got to go, but I've just joined the group. As tank we better have a meeting of the board and discuss it."

"Well, darn it," said Columbus Brown, "I want in on this cream pool and I live outside the district."

"We'll let you in, Clumb," said the colonel.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Thought for the Day.

The man who does only what he must or ought to do is not worth as much as the man who wants to do more.

The Wrong Course.

Some fellows don't try to master their work; they are too busy trying to work their master.—Boston Transcript.

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Cures Biliousness, Constipation, Sick Headache, Indigestion, Drug stores. Ad.

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Always Keep Allcock's Plasters in your home. Invaluable for all local aches and pains. Inexpensive, absolutely pure, safe and effective.—Ad.

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Nothing is so unreasonable and inconsistent as fortune.

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