

Lim Jucklin on Truth

By Opie Read

Usually it is age rather than wisdom that establishes a man as the oracle of a rural neighborhood. But sometimes it is a sort of quaintness, a readiness and an aptness in the expression of opinion, and often it requires more judgment than is likely to be found in most communities to detect the difference between facility of speech and that intellectual virtue which the ancients regarded as sapience. One night at a social gathering to celebrate the golden wedding of a justice of the peace old man Brizintine had for more than half an hour held forth on the beauties of an unpromising truth when Lim Jucklin remarked:

"Yes, there are very few things more beautiful than the truth—sometimes. But I don't know anything that has given the vicious better opportunity to vent their spleen than truth at all hazards. The man that don't know when to tell the truth or to sidestep a trifle from it hasn't enough judgment to be trusted with a dangerous article."

"Do you mean to say," said Brizintine, "that truth is a dangerous article?"

"Yes, sir, sometimes as dangerous as gunpowder in the hands of an idiot. That is, when truth is restricted to its narrowest sense, and that is the way that some men insist upon using it. Mack—somebody—I came across him somewhere—wanted to know if there was such a thing as administerin' to a mind diseased. There is, and it is the withholdin' from that mind the true state of its own condition. A good deal of the sickness of this world is in the mind only. This don't make it any the less real, for the mind is as real as the body and a good deal more so. We see that a man's mind is diseased. He asks our opinion, and if we tell him the truth it confirms his own belief and makes him worse, and maybe a few doses of our truth will finish him. No matter how big a liar a feller may be, we believe him when he tells us we ain't lookin' well."

"I don't exactly follow you," replied Brizintine, "but wouldn't you rather know the truth on all occasions?"

"Well, not perhaps until afterward. I recollect that one time I went on three notes for a man. When the first one fell due the feller that held all three came to me and said that the man I had accommodated had signed over property enough to meet the other two, but that I would have to pay the first one. It didn't amount to enough to warrant me in sellin' my farm, so I went to work with extra force and made the money and paid

it. Well, about six months afterward here came the feller again and said a mistake had been made and that it was the third note that was to be taken care of and that I'd have to pay the second one. This shocked me a good deal, but he declared by all that was good and bad that the third one would give me no trouble, so I strained again, doubled the forces of my energy and soon met the other note without sellin' my farm. Then I knew I was all right; but, sir, in due time here came the holder of the notes and said that he was sorry to have made such a mistake but that the property set aside was worthless and that I'd have to pay the third note. This hit me between the eyes, but I strained again and paid the note."

"But I don't see where the virtue of all that lya' come in," said Brizintine.

"Well, I do. If it had been made known to me at first that I had to pay the three notes I would have let my farm go at a forced sale and would have been worse than homeless; but as it was, believin' that I could meet the small amount, I went to work with a vim and when I got through I found that the surplus of my extra exertion had put me beyond where I had ever been before. The holder of the notes was a wise man. He knew that the feller I had signed for had left the neighborhood, dishonest and broke; and he knew, also, that the full knowledge of it, told to me right off, would crush me. In a way he was a liar, but both him and me benefited by it. There is such a thing as bein' a professional truth teller just as there is a professional honesty. I recollect once there was a toll gate over here on the pike, and it was kept by an old man named Bowles. He and his son worked out in the field while his wife took care of the gate. On one occasion she went away to look after some young chickens and left the gate open. Along came a man on a horse. He halted and no one came out. Then, lookin' across the field, he saw the old feller and his son at work hoein' corn; so he got down off his horse and trudged across the clods of the field and came up to where Bowles was sweatin' under the br'lin' sun."

"There wasn't anybody down at the house to let me through the gate," said he.

"That so?" the old man inquired, lookin' at him sharp.

"Yes, so I have brought you the five cents."

"Oh, you have," he said, takin' the five cents and lookin' at it as if it

was a curiosity. "Nobody there, eh? But wasn't the gate open?"

"Yes, the gate was open all right."

"But you wouldn't ride through?"

"No, I didn't."

"And you come trudgin' all the way across this field in the hot sun to pay five cents?"

"Yes, sir, I've done that because I'm honest."

"The old man turned to his boy and called out: 'Jim, watch this feller. He'll steal somethin' before he gets off the place.'"

"Some of the boys laughed and Brizintine said: 'Well, but the man proved his honesty.'"

"Ah, hah, and that was the trouble: He wanted to prove it. He was too particular, and a good many such little things were brought up in his favor some time afterward when he was arrested for forgery, but they proved it on him and sent him to the penitentiary just the same. If honesty hasn't become so much of a thoughtless habit as to be unconscious it will wear watchin'. There ain't nothin' more beautiful than the principle of truth, and its highest aim is to benefit man. But when it is turned into a profession they make a sort of art of it, and from what I can gather, art as art always goes a little too far to be real."

"But you wouldn't teach a son to lie?" said Brizintine.

"No, but I would teach him truth so sly as to make him believe it was born in him. One bit of inherent virtue is better than a hundred virtues acquired. The constitution we are born with will stand more strain than the one we build up. You can fatten a razorback hog, mebbe, just the same as a Berkshire, but give him a chance and he will run off his fat, because he was born that way. But keep on fattenin' razorbacks, and after several generations they will lose their disposition to run wild. Gettin' back to truth, it ought to be an unconscious quality, like a healthy organ in the body. A man don't begin to doctor his stomach until he feels that he's got one, and truth that needs medicine ain't of the best sort. You know what the Son of Man said when they asked him if he would pay tribute to Caesar. He didn't say yes or no, but he gave 'em a beautiful figure. A blunt truth would not have been any truer and not half so wise."

"But, Uncle Lim," said a young fellow, "how about a 'possum dog that barks up the wrong tree jest to encourage a feller?"

"My son," replied old Limuel, "I've been talkin' about men and not dogs."

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SHE BAMBOOZLES HIM.



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The Word of Excuse. Ascum—I've often wondered what a diplomat really means when he speaks of expediency.

Wise—Usually it means that his diplomacy has failed.

Truth and Quality

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A Cold Lunch. The pupils of a distinguished professor of zoology, a man well known for his eccentricities, noted one day two tidy parcels lying on their instructor's desk as they passed out at the noon hour. On their return to the laboratory for the afternoon lecture they saw but one. This professor took carefully up in his hand as he opened his lecture.

"In the study of vertebrata we have taken the frog as a type. Let us now examine the gastrocnemius muscle of this dissected specimen."

So saying the professor untied the string of his neat parcel and disclosed to view a ham sandwich and a boiled egg.

"But I have eaten my lunch," said the learned man bewilderedly.—Lippincott's.

A Good Turn. "Here, wake up," cried Subbubs, appearing on his porch in his pajamas. "You've got a nerve to be sleeping in our hammock."

"Nerve?" replied the hobo, sleepily. "Why, I'm a benefactor; if it wasn't for me holdin' his hammock down de mosquitoes would 'a' lugged it off long ago."

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Without labor there is no arriving at rest, nor without fighting can the victory be reached.—Thomas a Kempis.

SMALL THING HE FORGOT.

May Have Accounted for His Proposal Being Turned Down.

Senator Beveridge described, at a dinner, an absent-minded farmer. "The man was so absent-minded," he said, "that he couldn't open his mouth without making an arrant ass of himself."

"Once he courted a young woman. His suit looked promising for a time. Then, with a sorrowful visage, he ceased his courtship."

"Yet she seemed infatuated with you, Jabez," said I, one day when he came to me for sympathy.

"She were, too," Jabez agreed.

"Well, what could have been the trouble?"

"Dunno," said he. He filled his pipe. "Dunno; but when I perposed, she turned me down cold."

"Perhaps your proposal wasn't ardent enough?" I suggested.

"Oh, it was fiery," said Jabez. "Hot as pepper. I told her she was the only woman I'd ever loved, ever looked at, ever thought of, or—"

"But, said I, 'you forgot, then, you were a widower.'"

"Jingo," said Jabez, 'so I did.'"

MRS. FRANK STROEBE



A Remarkable Recovery. Mrs. Frank Stroebe, R. F. D. 1, Appleton, Wis., writes: "I began using Ferrus a few months ago, when my health and strength were all gone, and I was nothing but a nervous wreck, could not sleep, eat or rest properly, and felt no desire to live. Ferrus made me look at life in a different light, as I began to regain my lost strength."

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I've Been Thinking

By Charles Battell Loomis

It was the night before Christmas. How easy to write those words. How much literature has been started by that phrase—but it didn't all turn out to be literature. Yes, that phrase was a good starter; it is the locomotive that draws a long and oftentimes heavy train of thought along ways covered with ice and snow past the homes of the rich and poor; and the inevitable destination of each train is Merry Christmas.

It is easy to get up steam and start your train along the rails—rails at the heartlessness of the rich; rails at the insincerity that accompanies the giving of presents; rails at the helpless condition of the poor, with so much money locked up in safes. You can get along on the rails all right for a time. But after the engine has gone a few feet—particularly if it be verse you are writing—the wheels revolve on the slippery track (and in your head) and it sometimes takes a heap of sand to get her going again.

You are approaching a crossing now. It is time to ring the bell. "Ring happy bells, across the snow." Your Christmas story wouldn't be the real thing if you didn't work that in. It is now about time to stop and let your hero or heroine, or both, get aboard. And while the train waits pluck a few holly berries and mistletoe, for these are indispensable.

Now you're off again. Is your hero going to be rich or poor? If poor, make him barefoot and have him wonder what he'll hang up in lieu of stockings for the visit of old Kris Kringle—be sure to call him by that quaint title at least once. If he be rich, clothe him in gold stockings, and it will puzzle the old saint how to fill them.

The train is slowing up again. It is here that the consumptive mother and the rich and surly uncle come aboard. Make the old man a Grand-grind. Buy a copy of Christmas carols from the train boy, so you'll be able to get the right atmosphere for your story. Also open the window and let in a whiff of frosty air.

You'd better stop pretty soon for

refreshments. Whether you're going to feed your characters on stale fish-balls and candle-ends or on a regular turkey dinner, a meal of some kind is absolutely necessary.

The journey hasn't been so bad thus far, and you needn't make it much longer. Remember that the engineer and the reader are human and let up on them.

If your hero be poor make it all right with him, just as those bells are ushering in the dawn of Christmas; if he be rich, give him the usual change of heart, and from habitual and ingrained meanness and rasping ill-tempered nigardness morph him into a genial old philanthropist—it'll go, in a Christmas story.

Drop a few turkeys and cranberries on the poor consumptive's bed; let some kind-hearted old Hebrew in the sock business donate a dozen of the useful articles to the poor little barefoot boy, fill 'em up with candies and the usual outfit, and then have the brakeman stick his head in at the car door and yell: "Merry Christmas. Last stop!"

HERE are mornings that invite women who live in or near the country to go out and take a walk. Those are the very mornings when stockings need to be darned or shelves need to be dusted, or perhaps floors need to be swept.

Now there is no question but that a plain duty lies before these women—early in the morning.

Will the woman go out and breathe the morning air and fill her eyes with nature's paintings or will she resolutely sit down to her darning or stand up to her dusting and sweeping?

Women, learn to do your whole duty in this matter. Do not be swayed by foolish promptings; do not say: "It will not make any difference if I do it just this once. I can do the other thing later."

It will make a great deal of difference to your children and to your husband. It may be their stockings that you are darning or his desk that you are dusting. It makes a great deal of

difference whether you do your duty or not every morning.

When you rise from the breakfast table and see the basket of undarned stockings or notice that you can write your name in the dust that has accumulated since the furnace was last shaked—when you see these things and then look out of the window, and the birds and the air and the scene invite you to take a walk along pleasant paths, do your duty by your husband and your children and yourself. Take the walk.

NOW is the time of year when, as Chaucer said, "longen folk to gon on pilgrimages" and these good Americans go abroad and visit strange lands.

And some of them never forget that they are good Americans, but proclaim it wherever they go so that the foreigner laughs in his sleeve and says: "There are those boastful Americans again. Me thinks they do protest too much."

If you are sure deep down in your heart that on the whole you belong to a country that is a little the best on earth you will do well to say nothing about it while you are abroad.

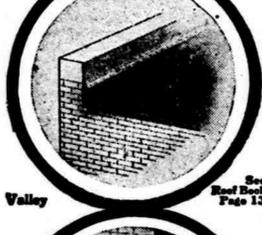
Just act so well that perfection of manners will come in time to mean something distinctively American, and then, when the foreigner sees a sober, well-behaved, kindly man walking along the streets of his town he will say: "Ah, it is easy to see he is an American. There are no people in all the world as fine as they—not even my own countrymen."

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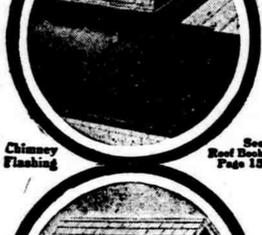
For and Against Suffrage Cause. Marie Corelli continues to write and speak against "votes for women," in England, while Beatrice Harraden is busy traveling from place to place giving readings from "Ships that Pass in the Night" and her other books to raise money to help the suffrage cause. It is said that Miss Corelli has refused to meet Miss Harraden in debate, saying she didn't care to make a spectacle of herself.



Wall Flashing See Book Page 13



Valley See Book Page 13



Chimney Flashing See Book Page 13



Over Old Shingles See Book Page 5



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