



MERELY A FEW RAMBLING THOUGHTS

There died in an eastern city a few days ago a man who had accumulated a fortune of \$100,000,000 during a business career covering three-quarters of a century. That is a whole lot of money, but it seems to have been about all that this man accumulated.

Was it worth while? It was his boast that he never took a vacation—too busy making money. He never got out into the woods with his friends and lay under the shade of the grand old trees and talked about the old days of boyhood. He never walked along down the shady pathways and indulged in sweet memories of other days. He just went along accumulating something that could do him no possible good as long as he retained possession of it.

A few years ago there died in a little Illinois town a man who left comparatively little money, but he left something immeasurably better than money. He left the memory of a well spent life. He left a magnificent college which his energy and his money had in large part created. He left thousands of men and women and children who gathered around his bier and wept for the friend and neighbor and benefactor who had gone before. He left a big family of sons grown to manhood, every one of whom is a model citizen—strong, Christian men. He scattered sunshine wherever he went. During his lifetime he made lots of money, but he spent it royally—not in selfish pleasure but helping his fellows.

Which would you rather leave behind—a hundred million dollars or the memory of such a life as that led by the splendid old man who died in the little Illinois town?

The writer of this department "played hookey" the other day, and he did not go alone. He was accompanied by two girls. One of them is quite young, being only five years old, but the other is a young lady who coyly admits that eight summers have flown over her head. We didn't tell anybody about it, either. At the breakfast table we "swiped" bread and butter while the Boss of the Household was not looking, and the oldest young lady made a surreptitious visit to the cookie jar just before the three of us sneaked out the kitchen door, slipped up the alley and hiked off down the back streets and out into the woods over beyond the asylum. The Little Miss carried a tin can full of worms, and the Big Boy carried the rods and lines.

Just back of the asylum Salt creek cuts through a rocky bluff and the water ripples and tumbles over the stones, singing a never-ending lullaby. Just back from the stream a huge flat rock rests in the shade of the tree-lined and rocky bluff, and a spring of clear water trickles down into the creek. Right there the Little Miss, the Big Boy and the Young Woman stopped and prepared to spend the day.

The Boss of the Household was sure to find a hastily scribbled note on the sideboard in the dining room, and the Head Push at the office was going to labor under the impression that the Big Boy was not feeling well enough to work. So there was nothing to worry the truants, and they proceeded to enjoy themselves. The Big Boy spent most of his time baiting hooks

and unhooking bullheads that the girls caught, and when not busy at that he lay back with his spine up against a mossy rock and the favorite meerschaum between his lips. Through his half-closed eyes he could see all kinds of pretty pictures in the clouds, and the delighted screams of the girls when their corks went under was far sweeter music than Sousa ever got out of his famous band.

Along about noon the Big Boy hustled around and found some big leaves that he soon pinned up with thorns until they made respectable drinking cups, and then spread the bread and butter sandwiches out on some other big leaves that performed duty as a tablecloth. The only trouble about the lunch was that there wasn't near enough of it, and the Little Miss insisted on either hiking for home or having more to eat. So the Big Boy after warning them to sit still and not go near the creek, chased off over the bluff and found a farm house. After proper negotiations he secured a bucket of rich milk, some more bread and butter and a hatful of mellow June apples. Laden with the spoil he hurried back and managed to fill a couple of aching voids.

About 3 o'clock the Little Miss and the Big Girl succumbed to the drowsy heat and tumbled off to sleep under a tree. The Big Boy forgets whether he went to sleep or merely fell into a trance, but it was nearly six o'clock before he realized that it was supper time and the truants two miles from home. He roused his fellow truants and after the lines were wound up and the worms gently thrown into the water for the fish that hadn't been caught, the three of them started home. It was a case of "ride and tie" most of the way, for the Big Boy had to be the horse and carry the small truants. It was 7 o'clock before they reached the mouth of the alley and managed to sneak into the house without revealing themselves to the Boss of the Household. She wasn't very mad, judging by the supper she gave the truants. She scolded a little, but the twinkle in her eyes belied her words.

Do you reckon for a minute that the man who recently died in New York City after accumulating a hundred million dollars ever had as much fun in one day as either of those three truants had? Do you suppose that he had half as much fun hoarding up a million as the Big Boy has had every single day since he played "hookey" when the two little misses, with mysterious winks and nods told him off into a corner so mamma can not hear and indulge in reminiscences of that day spent in the woods? The Big Boy frankly confesses that he would like to have a few million dollars, but it would take more millions than Russell Sage or Alfred Belt or John D. Rockefeller ever accumulated to buy from him the kisses, the caresses and the smiles of the little misses who sneaked off into the woods with him a few days ago.

A few days ago a great big hulking brute was arraigned in the Lincoln police court on the charge of beating his wife. She was a frail little woman and she declined to prosecute, although her face was beaten to a pulp by the fists of her brutal husband. But the husband was fined \$10 and costs,

and as he didn't have the money he was started off to jail. Then the wife, paid the fine out of money she had earned by taking in washing and was allowed to take her husband home with her.

The incident reminded us of the recent discussion about establishing a whipping post for wife beaters. The writer does not favor the whipping post for wife beaters. You will remember that in the comic opera, "The Mikado," the mikado, in striving to think up a punishment to fit the crime, suggested something lingering, like boiling in oil? Well, does it not occur to you that the whipping post is not "lingering" enough for a brute like the one described above?

Whatever the little dog's name was before he was arrested, his name is "Brick" now. The name was suggested by reason of the little dog's hair and its actions while facing what seemed then to be immediate death. "Brick" is a shaggy-haired terrier, and was arrested because he violated the law by not wearing a tag. He was thrust into the pound and after being held three days without redemption was ordered shot. When the poundmaster let "Brick" out and thrust a revolver against his shaggy head "Brick" never flinched. On the contrary he sat up on his hind legs, and let his front paws lop over limply. In the meanwhile his red tongue lolled out and his eyes looked unflinchingly into the eyes of the executioner. "I can't shoot that dog," said the poundmaster.

So "Brick" went back into the cage. When the newspaper boys around police headquarters heard the story they took up a contribution and bought a tag for the dog. He was washed and christened "Brick," although he answered impartially to any name. "Brick" is living on the fat of the land, and spends most of his time resting on the cushioned seat of the patrol wagon.

"Cinders" is another dog. "Cinders" is a contraction of "Cinderella." So far as utilitarian purposes are concerned "Cinders" is as useless as a vermiform appendix, but there are three people who think more of that dog than of anything else. The other day the assessor called at the home of "Cinders's" master and of course the ownership of the dog came up.

"What is the dog worth?" queried the assessor.

"About a dime," replied the master.

"But what would you take for it?" "You could have her for nothing if I had the say-so," replied the master, "but the children would probably put a prohibitive price on her."

Turning to the little miss who was standing near by the assessor asked: "What would you take for your dog? A million dollars?"

"No, sir," was the instant reply. But the master hastily interposed and compromised by making the assessment on a basis of a valuation of \$5.

All this preliminary to a couple of questions.

"Do you own a dog?" "If you do, what would you take for the wag of that dog's tail when it is playing with your baby?"

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