

THE MAN FROM YONDER



By Harold Titus

SYNOPSIS

Ben Elliott—“Yonder”—makes his entry into the lumbering town of Tincup. He has brought along an old man, Don Stuart, who had been eager to reach Tincup. Elliott defeats Bull Duval, “king of the river,” and town bully, in a log-birling contest. Nicholas Brandon, the town's leading citizen, resents Stuart's presence, trying to force him to leave town and Elliott, resenting the act, knocks him down. Elliott is arrested.

CHAPTER II—Continued

“Guilty as charged, eh?” Able fumbled with the papers. “What brought you such a long way into Tincup, anyhow?”
“Because I'd heard Tincup was a tough nut to crack.”
A stir in the crowd, then a sharp look from Brandon to Elliott.
“Oh... Pond of nuts, are you?” Able asked and the look in his eyes was much less severe. “So you'd heard about Tincup and started for it from a long ways off and... Now this matter of nuts: You like all kinds?”
“Not all nuts; no.” The steel-gray eyes were a bit narrowed, now, as Elliott tried to plumb the old man's mood.
“Well, for instance: like peanuts?”
“No. Can't stand 'em.”
“Not at all? almonds, then?”
A twinkle was surely coming to life in the court's eyes but, seeing it, the defendant only frowned.
“Can't vote very strong for almonds.”
“Hum-m... How about black walnuts?”
“Now,” declared Elliott with a nod, “now, you're getting into real classy nuts!”
Men in the crowd looked at one another, not knowing what to make of this.
“Well, if you like black walnuts, would you say they were your favorite?”

The other considered this question with great, if not wholly genuine, seriousness.

“No, not exactly. I'd put black walnuts high up in the list, all right, your honor, but since you're interested about my preferences in nuts, I'd say that the best nut that ever hung outdoors or offered itself for the cracking was a good old hickory nut.”

“Real tough ones, eh?”
“Real tough ones, yes.”

Able wiped his face with a palm and wet his lips. The two looked long at one another and that spark passed which will jump from man to man, carried sometimes by a deed, often by a word, frequently by only a glance; that message which says as plainly as though inscribed in black characters against white background: “I like you; I am your friend!” It went from the old man to the young and back again from young to old. Nicholas Brandon understood and the lightnings in his dark eyes played more briskly, more ominously.

“And so you'd figure Tincup as a sort of hickory nut?”
“I had. Tincup has a reputation all through the Lake states. I'd heard so many times that a good man with ideas of his own, with independence and, maybe, with ambition had better keep away from here that I found myself hankering to get a look at the place.”
“What's your line of work?”
“I follow the timber... Anything.”

“Well, just what, for instance? What are some of the jobs you've held?”
Elliott smiled a bit.
“Good many. I was a chore boy once; another time I was a road monkey. I've teamed and sawed, worked as millwright and on rivers. Once or twice I've run a camp or two.”

“But your avocation, I take it, is looking for hard nuts?”
Brandon spoke now:
“Your honor! His voice was well modulated and yet in its quality was something which suggested iron covered with velvet. “As complaining witness in this case, may I suggest that we are beginning to waste time? This young man has pleaded guilty. Of course, I do not want to be put in the light of one who attempts to dictate to a court of law, but I have pressing matters to attend to and if we can get on...”

Outwardly this was only a suggestion, a plea; really, though, it was one way of demanding, of giving an order.
“Yes, you're a busy man, Nick,” Able said and nodded. “I'd sort of figured being busy here today, myself. Sort of wondered if somebody wouldn't bring in Bull Duval on a charge of assault and battery. He

trimmed my man Harrington so badly that he's gone and my operation's without a boss today. I sort of thought, being interested as you are in law and order, that Duval might be brought in.”
“That is something I know nothing about,” Brandon said severely.
“Likely not. You can't be expected to keep as close track of the men who work for you as I do of mine. That is, it isn't reasonable to think a man of your caliber would.”

He spoke drily and Elliott, watching the two, could see that his words stung Brandon. The Justice straightened in his chair, however.
“But maybe we are delaying things. Now, Mr. Elliott, don't you think it a little out of the way to come into a town, a total stranger, and upset all that town's precedents? If you, instead of one of Mr. Brandon's hired men, had cleaned up on my man Harrington, for instance, it might not have been such a grave offense. But here you come and pick out the one man in Tincup who hasn't been struck or even threatened in longer than I can recall—a man who is regarded here about like most folks would regard a baron of the Middle Ages—and toss him out into the mud! Why, Elliott, that's not ever happened before!”

“Probably it didn't hurt Nick much, but there are his feelings to consider. Aren't you ashamed of giving people a chance to leer at Mr. Brandon?”
“It wasn't a very smart thing to do,” Elliott admitted. “It's not likely now, that I'll even get a chance to see how hard a nut this town really is.”
“And no worse than you deserve!” Able said sharply. “You know better than to carry on that way, Elliott. I've got to give you a fine commensurate with your offense. I'll fine you a dollar and seventy-five cents for costs or send you to jail for a day.”

In the rear a sacrilegious titter or two. From the sheriff, a grunt; from Nicholas Brandon a breath of offended dignity and a look that scorched. But on Ben Elliott's face only appeared a foolish smile.
“That's reasonable enough,” he said, “but the joker is this: I haven't even got the dollar!”
“Well, our jail's real comfortable, I'm told. A day there'll let you think over the advisability of going around the country muddying up the pants of respectable citizens!”
Elliott, though, faced even so short a jail sentence with anything but relish.

“I can get the money easy enough,” he said. “That is if you, your honor, or somebody else'll send a wire for me.”
“That might be arranged. Where to?”
“Here—” He reached for a sheet of paper and pencil lying on the table. Swiftly he wrote the words: “Badger Forest Products company, Beech Ridge, Wisconsin.” He handed it to Able. “Will you wire for twenty-five dollars and sign my name? Send the message collect.”
“That's a big outfit,” the judge said. “You figure they'll do as you ask?”

“Well, they never have turned me down for anything I've asked. Of course, there's always the first time. If you'll do that...”
“Until that gets back, Sheriff, I suppose it's me for the brig... Is that right, Judge?”
Able was studying the address and when he looked up and grunted an affirmative reply his gaze was far away. Far, far away.

For a considerable interval after his court room had emptied, Able Armitage sat motionless in his chair. His eye still held that far-away look, staring into space, and now and again he picked up the scrap of paper bearing the address young Elliott had written and scanned it closely.
“By cracker!” he said, an hour after being left alone. “By cracker by Jingo! It might be, you know... It may be, possibly, perhaps might be!”

Thereupon he rose, went to a wall telephone and put in a call for Nathan Bridger, general manager of the Badger Forest Products company, of Beech Ridge, Wisconsin.
After this he stood for a time in the front window, peering out into the street. A man came along the sidewalk, a man of about Able's years, bearing a limp and rusty bag which stamped him as a physician. He approached the entry.
“Big day, Able,”—as the Justice opened the door.
“Yeah. Big.”
“Old Don's back.”
“So I heard.”
“Bad shape, too.”
“I heard that. Real bad, Emory?”

Emory Sweet nodded gravely.
“Heart's like a sponge. He can't last long... Nick was all for sending him back to Hemlock, but I told him it would be murder to move him now.”
“Oh, Nick showed up, did he? Doesn't like the notion of Don's being in this vicinity?”
“It's about as popular with him as smallpox. When I'd prevailed on him to let Don alone I told him the truth; that he can't last more than a few weeks and Nick looked like a man who... well, like one who'd heard good news.”

Able nodded. “Safer for Brandon to have him in his grave. But when old Don goes, seems like the last chance of ever clearing the thing up's gone too.”
“Looks that way. Unless he'll talk before he dies.”
“Even so, it wouldn't amount to much. He's an old bum; he was a known drunkard at the time. It happened so long ago, and with the courts controlled by who they are...”

“All but yours.”
“And mine without any jurisdiction in sure-enough trouble.”
The doctor started out, but halted in the doorway.
“Hear Harrington's gone.”
“Yes. The Bull ran him out of town.”
“Brandon?”
“Don't be simple, Emory. Who else?”

“He certainly can't forget the Hoot Owl, can he? What are you going to do now, Able?”
The other shook his head gravely. “I wish I could give you an answer... or myself an answer. All forenoon I've had a feeling in that path,—extending his creased right hand, “as if the end of a rope were slipping through it.”

“Tough,” muttered the doctor as he went out.
An hour later Able Armitage left his office. He moved with great alacrity for one of his years and stopped only once and that was to draw Bird-Eye Blaine from the throng of onlookers that lined the sidewalk.
“Got your car in town, Bird-Eye?”
“Have? Run her around by the jail, will you? Might need you; again, I might not. Best to be prepared, though.”

Bird-Eye nodded assent and the old Justice went on.
Ben Elliott, solitary prisoner in the county jail, lay on the least objectionable of the bunks he found there, smoking and staring at the dingy ceiling.
He raised his head sharply when a key grated in the big steel door leading to the cell block and stopped puffing on his pipe when



“Hum-m. He Says You're No Good.” the opening barrier revealed Able Armitage.

“Hello, Judge!” Elliott cried and grinned.

Able wasted no time.
“I've just been talking with Bridger!”

“Bridger? He here?”
“Oh, no. I called him on long distance.” Able smiled as the other gave a puzzled frown. “Bridger and I are old friends. We fought Spain together... and malaria when we had Spain whipped. I think a lot of Bridger. I've a great respect for him and his opinions.”
“So've I. Everybody has.”
“Hum-m. He says you're no good.”

Elliott started. “What-a-t? Why didn't ask; I forgot it. I wasn't interested in your fine. We can take care of that. I was interested in finding out about you... what kind of a nut-cracker you are.”

The young gray eyes were studying the old blue ones closely, now.
“I found out,” Able continued. “He says you're no good.” In the pause the Justice chuckled softly. “He says you're absolutely no good to yourself or anybody else. He tells me that you know more about logging and sawmills than any man your age has a right to know and he's seen a lot of men. He says you can make the worst crew that ever infested a shanty eat out of your hand. He says you don't know what it is to be tired or afraid... And then he says again that you're no use on earth, so far as he can tell!”

Elliott was grinning a bit foolishly now and rubbed his chin.

Able went on:
“He told me that before the war

—your war, not ours—they'd figured you as one of the prize young men in their organization but that since you've come home there's nothing you'll do. You can do anything, he says, but he said I asked him why and he said he guessed it was because everything they had to offer you was too simple, which I translated to mean that they haven't a good, tough hickory nut to offer you.”

The other's rather embarrassed smile faded.
“I'm sorry! I think a lot of Mr. Bridger. He certainly has been white with me. I've tried, Judge. Honest, I've tried to give 'em all I had but... But he's right. The war upset me, like a lot of others. I haven't got my feet on the ground yet. After the big show everything else seems too d—easy!”

“Likely, You haven't tried my job yet,” Able said gravely.
“Being a justice in Tincup?”
“No. Not that. My real job—my real, tough nut—is being administrator for an estate. The McManus estate, which is nothing more than as pretty a piece of hardwood as ever stood outdoors. The Hoot Owl stuff we call it. Trying to operate it to a profit and hang on as administrator so some other man won't step in and give that stuff away is my particular hard nut.”

“I like the way that you looked at Nick Bran—on in court this afternoon. No young man has looked at him that way since I can remember. That's why I telephoned Bridger; because I liked the way you looked at Brandon and because I'm about worn out trying to crack a hard nut. That's why I'm here.”

“Maybe from what Bridger told me, and from what I've seen of you, you might maybe, perhaps, like to take a crack at this nut. The fact is, I'm through, Elliott. I've given the job all I have. I'm at my wit's end and the estate's at its rope's end. We're licked, as we stand now, and the truth is that maybe, perhaps, possibly I might do a right fair job of begging you to come and help me!”

Elliott did not speak, but watched Able as he fumbled in his pocket for a sketch map. Able paused for a moment, and then continued:
“Come over by the window. Now, here's the lay-out,—spreading the map on the sill. “Here's the railroad, main line. This is Hoot Owl siding with our mill. It's a long, narrow strip, you see, seventy-six feet wide. Four miles of slash to north of the mill. Our railroad goes up through the chopping, so. We've an old coffee-pot of twenty-ton rod engine and freight cars, all more or less ready for junk. Here's the camp now and we're cutting on the second forty north. Got thirty-odd hands there that pass for men.”

“Harrington was handling it for me. Man named Buller's millwright and a fellow named Ruppert's boss at camp, Harrington's gone—driven out—and we're in the soup!”

He paused and looked at Elliott, whose keen eyes were studying the details of the map.
“It's a haywire outfit. The locomotive broke down yesterday and unless the boys get her working the mill will be out of logs in a week. The mill itself is a grand old ruin but saws, after a fashion. The lumber in the yards is mortgaged up to the last cull piece, there's not enough in the bank to meet interest and pay-roll and there's no boss on the job.”

Elliott looked at the old man.
“You said it was a pretty a piece of hardwood as ever stood outdoors. If so, why's it in this jam?”

Able Armitage lifted a hand in gesture and whispered sharply one word:
“Brandon!”

Ben put down the map, replaced the pipe stem between his teeth and shoved his hands deep into pockets.
“Brandon, eh?” He nodded. “Checks out on the stories I'd heard... So Brandon's put you on the toboggan! Why?”

Able shrugged. “Six years ago I was made administrator of this estate and to keep the carrying charges from eating it up, I started to operate. There wasn't a chance to sell the stumpage to anybody but Brandon. Nobody's going to put their money into a devil-ridden country like this! There are too many stories going round of what's happened to others who have tried to work alongside Nick. We had to cut and mill or sell the stumpage to Brandon at his own price. Maybe, if it had been mine, I'd have sold; but the owner of this timber is an orphan girl and... a man doesn't like to quit under these circumstances.”

“But every man I've put on to run the thing has been beaten, and I've had some good ones there. They can't get decent crews in the first place. Buller, the millwright, Thomas, the camp cook, and a crazy Irishman named Bird-Eye Blaine, who's camp boss, are the only three men you can count on. Brandon spies the good men who come along and if they don't work for him he sees to it that his Bull Duval drives 'em out of the country. And this matter of labor is only one item that he makes hard to supply.”

“Until now he hasn't been able to touch me. I've managed to hold out against him politically. But he's watching and the probate court is watching, and unless I show some progress by the first of the year I'm going to be booted out as administrator. With another administrator in control he'll buy this timber for a song, a girl will be robbed and the shame of this community will be complete!”

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Youthful Love of Poetry

Cultivated Taste for the Beauty of the Written Word the Inalienable Right of Every Child; Poet and Youngster Akin in Spirit.

Poetry, like spinach, has been called a cultivated taste. More than one harrowed mother has given up the struggle to make Junior or Jane acquire a liking for either. While the defense of spinach rests with somebody else, in *The Parents' Magazine* Helen Van Pelt Wilson takes up the case for poetry.
“You can't expect a child who has never seen a budding willow or an alder by the river,” Miss Daffy-down-dilly or a racing cloud, to be very much interested in poems about them. Yet by stimulating the senses, by a constant appeal to sight, smell, sound, touch and association I have developed love of poetry in my little daughter not yet five years of age. Now a poem springs up to accompany every act of her day.”
To be sure, daily walks in the country give the imaginative back-

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Significance in Period of Child's First Steps

There are no signs of superiority in children who take their first steps before they reach fifteen months, according to a study made at the University of Pennsylvania.
But those children long retarded in walking, especially after reaching the fifteen-month period, which is considered the average to begin walking, are significantly inferior, as a rule, the results of the study suggest.

Conducted by Dr. Miles Murphy, assistant professor of psychology, the study is based on the records of 712 children brought to the psychological clinic during a period of five years. Of these, a total of 350 had been diagnosed as normal by psychological examiners, and the remainder as feeble-minded.

The records show that of the normal children, for whom the average age of walking was 14.99 months, approximately 29 per cent started to walk before they were one year of age; approximately 60 per cent between twelve and seventeen months, and the remaining 20 per cent at eighteen months or later.

“Why does it matter so much whether children love poetry?” asks Mrs. Wilson, and promptly answers her own question. “To me poetry is an eternal glory and shining light. I shall feel a lamentable failure if I can't pass this joy along to my child. Poetry is a refuge in time of material losses, agony of grief, thwarted ambitions; there is great comfort in rhythmic beauty poured over the troubled soul.”

With convictions such as these, no wonder Mrs. Wilson feels that poetry is the inalienable right of every child. From knowledge born of her own experience she declares there is spiritual kinship between poet and youngster. “Both are imaginative, curious, full of wonder and idealism. Both love words for their own sake.”

When it comes to selecting poetry for children much of the choice should be left to the child.
“The acid test is the child's own liking,” claims Mrs. Wilson. “Besides this no laboratory proof, no age or classroom list, no ‘shoulds’ nor ‘oughts’ can stand. ‘I like this’ and ‘Don't let's read that’ are the only true determinators.” In conclusion she adds a word against keeping poetry just within the child's scope.

“You will find Junior and Jane will enjoy much they can't entirely understand, particularly if the rhythm is strong. It's good for a child to stand on tiptoe now and then.”

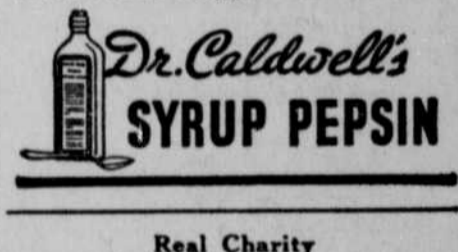
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He who regrets not yesterday, he who fears not tomorrow, he is the lord of happiness, he is the king of sorrow.

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