

# SPARKS FAMILY HAPPENINGS

## THE KID EATS PAINTER'S P.E.

BY EDWARD B. CLARK



MR. SPARKS sat in the window of the little flat, darning. Tommy Sparks, aged four, had been allowed to go alone to play in the great yard that lies between the apartment building and the well private residence which faces the drive. Mr. Sparks was at his office, and all the young Sparkses, the young Sparkses, barring Tommy, were at school. From Mrs. Sparks' vantage point in the little bay window she could catch occasional glimpses of a painter in the big yard next door, who was moving along slowly from stone to stone painting the foundation of the house of their rich neighbor a subdued sort of red color.

Mrs. Sparks was dreamily wondering why the foundation which had been pretty in its natural hue, needed painting at all, when Tommy Sparks toddled in through the doorway leading from the kitchen. Tommy had come up from the yard the back way. Tommy had some streaks of red running diagonally down from each corner of his mouth, and his linen dress was spotted in places with the same color.

"Tommy Sparks," demanded his mother, "what on earth have you been eating?"

Tommy climbed into a chair, swung his legs in his infantile way and said: "Mamma, painter's pie's good."

Mrs. Sparks gave one hurried, horrified glance through the window at the red paint which was being daubed on the neighbor's house, and then turned her anguished countenance toward Tommy.

"Tommy," her voice was a pleading wail, "did you eat the painter's stuff out of the pail?"

"Yes, out of the pail; painter's pie's good," answered Tommy.

Mrs. Sparks shrieked. The maid rushed in from the kitchen. "Get the doctor, the druggist and Mr. Sparks," screamed Mrs. Sparks. "Tommy's eaten paint and sugar of lead and everything. Go, girl, go." Susan rushed through the door, sent the corner druggist flying up to the house, ordered the clerk to telephone Mr. Sparks and then sat out on a chase for the doctor.

In the meantime Mrs. Sparks was moaning over Tommy, who was taking the unusual commotion which he had created as blandly as would most four-year-olds. He insisted on occasionally reiterating that "painter's pie was good," and at each reiteration the mother's heart sank.

The druggist rushed in. "Tommy has eaten paint. Heaven alone knows how much. It must have had sugar of lead in it, and that's sweet and that's why he ate it."

The druggist grabbed up Tommy, half threw him onto a lounge, and then turned to the mother. "Control yourself, Mrs. Sparks; life depends on instant action. Get me salt, potash and softsoap." Luckily Mrs. Sparks had all three articles in the house, and she rushed off to the kitchen and brought them back. Tommy as yet showed no sign of collapse. The druggist put two tablespoonfuls of salt in half a glass of lukewarm water and forced Tommy to swallow it sputtering. This dose was followed up with a heroic one of potash, and then Tommy was made to swallow a large coffee cupful of softsoap. With the soap down and Tommy's eyes hanging out of his head and well down over his cheek bones, the druggist turned the youngster over on his stomach on the couch and shook him.

The only thing about Tommy that didn't rebel at this treatment was his stomach. That held onto its unaccustomed load with a pertinacity worthy of something better. At this juncture the painter appeared on the scene. He admitted to the tearful Mrs. Sparks that he had left his paint pot on the ground where Tommy could have found it for about five minutes while he went round the corner to get a glass of beer.

At this instant the doctor fell in at the door on the heels of the maid. He approved the druggist's treatment and added to it a large dose of ipecac. Under this last added horror Tommy's stomach and spirit both gave way. Like the younger hopeful in Helen's Babies, he played whale, and while he didn't cast up Jonah he cast up pretty near everything else.

While Tommy was in the throes Mr. Sparks arrived, ashily-lipped and shaken. The doctor turned to him. "I trust, Mr. Sparks, that if we can keep him at it for ten minutes more we may save his life." Tommy kept at it.

The painter, who had retreated before the stricken countenance of Mrs. Sparks, now reappeared. He was carrying in one hand a dinner pail, which he held upside down to show those assembled that it was absolutely empty.

"When I came to work this morning," the painter said, "I had three pieces of berry pie in this pail. I ain't got any now, a fact I just discovered. I guess maybe the youngster knows where it went."

Tommy, just out of a paroxysm, turned his head and caught sight of the empty dinner pail. "Painter's pie's good," he murmured.

Mrs. Sparks sank into a chair laughing and crying hysterically. A grin appeared on Mr. Sparks' face. The doctor and the druggist looked disgusted. Mr. Sparks gave the painter a dollar. "Go to a restaurant and get a square meal," he said.

"Henry," said Mrs. Sparks, still in a struggle between two emotions, "what shall we do with that boy?"

"Well," answered Henry as he surveyed Tommy and his surroundings, "I think from the cleaning these two professional gentlemen have just given him, that if we could turn him inside out he'd make a good advertisement for some brand of soap."

The Sparks' Old Soldier Janitor.

"Eliza," said Mr. Sparks on the night of the day that they moved into their new flat, "this apartment life is worse than one of Dante's circles. I'll make just one more move before I die, and that will be into a house in a suburb. Here we are just moved, everything topsy-turvy and no girl. Of course, the latest acquisition from the employment bureau had to leave us just to throw all the burden of the packing up and the unpacking on us. Then again the janitors of all flats are devils. I'll bet the one in this building will prove to be worse than any of the others, and even a man accustomed to using strong language can't say anything stronger than that. Just look at this muss, will you, and no one to help us fix up."

Just then the front doorbell rang.



"WHAT ON EARTH HAVE YOU BEEN EATING?"

Henry Sparks stumbled over two trunks, his daughter's bicycle, barked his shin, bruised his toes and finally reached the door. There in the hall stood a young woman, comely and strong looking. "Is this the place you want a girl?" she asked.

A sudden joy leaped into Henry Sparks' heart. "Yes," he said. "Come in. We have just moved; we're all upside down here. Look out for the boxes!"

Then Mr. Sparks led the way into the dining-room and turned the caller over to his wife. "Yes, we want a girl," said Mrs. Sparks; "we've just moved in, and it may be you won't want to stay now; you see how things are and what cleaning is to be done."

"I'm not afraid to work," said the girl.

At this answer, Henry Sparks, who stood in a corner, almost fainted. The girl produced a letter from a Lutheran clergyman in a little country village. It happened that Henry Sparks knew the man. The girl was taken on the spot, as she declared she was ready to go to work then and there and would have her things sent right over from her cousin's.

During the whole conversation Mrs. Sparks' face had worn a peculiar expression. When the girl had volunteered to stay Mrs. Sparks said: "How did you happen to know we wanted a girl?"

"I saw your advertisement," was the answer. "Here it is," and the girl pulled out a copy of the morning paper. Mrs. Sparks took it. "Mercy," she exclaimed, "that's the advertisement of Mrs. Smithkins, who lives in the flat underneath this. You came to the wrong apartment."

"Well, I like the looks of this place anyway, and I'll stay."

"Henry," said Mrs. Sparks, "won't

it be a case of false pretense if we keep her?"

"Not by a jugful. I'll send Mrs. Smithkins the price of her advertisement in an anonymous letter. 'To have and to hold' is a good motto in a case like this."

That girl Rose, who stumbled into the Sparks' flat that moving day night, was a dream. She cooked things to a turn; she was willing; she didn't have a cross word in her vocabulary; she didn't care to go to balls on Saturday night, and she was plump and good-looking. The Sparks' family life was ideal.

One morning as Mr. Sparks was leaving the building to go to the office he met the janitor, who was coming up from the basement leading a child with each hand. Mr. Sparks had barely noticed the janitor before. This morning something in the man's bearing struck him and turning, he said: "William, you've been in the service."

"Yes, sir," said William, "I put in five years in the Fourth cavalry."

"I can tell a regular the minute I clap eyes on him," said Mr. Sparks. "I put in a good many years myself. You have two fine children here, William."

"Yes," said William assentingly, and then Mr. Sparks said "Good-bye."

That night when Mr. Sparks reached home his wife said: "The janitor came up today and washed the windows. I didn't think it was a part of his work, but he said it was all right and insisted. He told me that he used to be in the regular army and that he knew you had been in the service, too."

"That's it, Eliza," said Henry, "an old soldier likes to do things for another old soldier. He washed our windows because we had both done hard duty on the plains. He must be a good, steady fellow, for he has a wife and two children. They have a flat in the basement."

Mr. Sparks met William quite frequently after this. William always saluted. If he happened to be standing still as Mr. Sparks passed he would come to "attention," clicking his heels together the while and saluting like the old campaigner he was. Almost every night when he reached home Mrs. Sparks would tell Henry of some new act of attention on the part

of the janitor. "He came up and went all over the plumbing today," she said one night. "He said he wanted to make sure that there wasn't any sewer gas in the place."

"There, it is just as I told you, Eliza," said Mr. Sparks; "this janitor doesn't want to see the family of an old soldier suffer. I'll give him a box of cigars tonight. Eliza, this is the finest kind of life. Never talk to me again about taking a suburban house."

Here the best girl that ever worked out stumbles in on us by accident, and we get a janitor who serves us as though we were moguls.

## Nuisance at the Table

Story of the Man Who Always Tried to Be Funny, Especially Before Guests.

In a story by Mary Stewart Cutting in the Woman's Home Companion appears the following characterization of a man who made himself a nuisance by always trying to be funny:

"Mr. Brentwood was well born, well educated and successful in affairs. He had, in the eyes of his family, one fault—he had a masculine sense of humor of a homely, almost rural type, at which his family winced uncontrollably. Mrs. Brentwood, even from the earliest days of their marriage, had been bent on imploring her Theodore when they were expecting company, not to be funny."

"Certain jokes or mannerisms of his at the table were of daily occurrence. Hardly noticed any more when they were alone, they sprang into startling prominence when there were guests. He always said, 'People come from miles around to hear us drink soup.' He jovially inquired if he might 'borrow the butter,' or if Eliza, the waitress, could 'spare him another

slice of bread.' He made puns on the vegetables and he had a habit of looking with sudden suspicion at any dish handed to him, no matter how familiar, and asking disgustedly, 'What is this, anyway? Strangers always inspired him particularly to their entertainment. Certain ancient, inherited anecdotes could be endured by his wife and children, even if with aching strain, but there was a bathtub story (Mr. Brentwood had in his early boyhood migrated with his parents to what was then the edge of the prairie) beginning mendaciously, 'You know, we never took baths when I was a boy,' that, though it was amusing, nearly went beyond the pale of refinement, and an awful toothbrush story which positively did. If people laughed at his stories, Mr. Brentwood became practically untrammelled.

"Another common table remark by Mr. Brentwood was that he never had any use for potato salad, because cold potatoes always reminded him of cold feet. It was also his habit to admonish people to 'eat slowly and distinctly.' He got this from the old saying, 'Read slowly and distinctly.'

Things went on this way for months. Henry Sparks told five real estate agents to quit looking up a country home for him. "You can't beat the combination I've got right here in the heart of Chicago," he said.

A box of cigars went a long way with the janitor. He insisted on beating the Sparks rugs, he gilded the radiators, he fixed the door knobs, and toward the end of the second month he was washing the windows every other day. The windows of the other flats were dingy and finger-marked. Rosa was a pearl of great price. She anticipated every wish of every member of the family. There was little left for Mrs. Sparks to do but to embroider and to mend Frances' stockings. For some reason or other, Henry Sparks, though he had always prided himself on his perspicacity, never noticed that whenever William found that something in the kitchen needed fixing the job was always one that required three or four days' time.

One night Mr. Sparks went down town to do some work. He didn't get back till one o'clock. He slipped off his shoes at the door so as not to awaken his wife. He passed through the hall, and feeling hungry he went back through the dining room with a mind and appetite bent on exploring the kitchen pantry. The door leading into the kitchen was shut. In his stocking feet Mr. Sparks made no noise. He opened the door quickly. The kitchen gas was burning. From the far end of the room came a clicking noise. William the janitor was standing at attention with his heels brought sharply together. As the man jumped to the position of a soldier Mr. Sparks saw that one of his arms had just dropped from its position of embrace about the waist of Rosa, the maid.

Mr. Sparks was horrified. He went back to days when as a "non-com" he had verbally lashed some bluecoat duty derelict.

"William," he said in a voice of thunder, "how dare you! You're a scoundrel, sir!"

"William's hand went to his forehead in a salute. "Rosa and I are to be married next week, Mr. Sparks," he said.

"Married!" was the gasping response. "How about your wife and two children down stairs?"

"That's my widowed sister and her two little ones. She's been keeping house for me," said William.

Mr. Sparks groaned and went limply back into the front room. He waked his wife. "Eliza," he said, "our dream is over. Rosa is going to marry the janitor. It wasn't any old soldier sentiment at all that made him wash windows. I'll tell Hunt in the morning to look for a home for us in the country," and, sighing, Mr. Sparks went to bed.

At the breakfast table next morning William and Rosa came in hand in hand. "We're going to be married next week, Mrs. Sparks," said Rosa. "but my sister wants a place and I'll send her here. She's a better cook than I am."

At this bit of information Mr. Sparks' face cleared visibly. "You both have my blessing," he said; "send in your sister Rosa, and if William leaves here I'll get old Highbreast, the landlord, to send a good janitor in his place, but I'll take good care that he is not an old soldier." And then, forgetful of everything else, Mr. Sparks turned to his wife and said: "They can't resist an old soldier, can they, my dear?"

Danger in "Shuttle Kissing." "Shuttle kissing," as a vehicle for the transmission of diseases from one person to another employed in English weaving sheds, is the subject of a recent report which has been issued as a parliamentary paper. The "kissing" referred to takes place when the operator puts the thread through an eye in the shuttle. This is done by placing the shuttle in the mouth and sucking the thread through the little opening. The report says that while the investigation has shown the present method to be uncleanly "and may even be a possible means of spreading infection," the committee does not think the time is yet ripe for insisting either by act of parliament or by regulations on the abolition of the existing form of shuttle.

## HAD ALREADY LEARNED.



"I hear your son's at college learning to be a author. Do you expect he'll soon learn to write for money?"

"Humph! He don't do nothin' else now."

## A CLERGYMAN'S TESTIMONY.

The Rev. Edmund Heslop of Wigtown, Pa., suffered from Dropsy for a year. His limbs and feet were swollen and puffed. He had heart fluttering, was dizzy and exhausted at the least exertion. Hands and feet were cold and he had such a dragging sensation across the loins that it was difficult to move.



Rev. E. Heslop.

After using 5 boxes of Dodds Kidney Pills the swelling disappeared and he felt himself again. He says he has been benefited and blessed by the use of Dodds Kidney Pills. Several months later he wrote: I have not changed my faith in your remedy since the above statement was authorized. Correspond with Rev. E. Heslop about this wonderful remedy.

Dodds Kidney Pills, 50c. per box at your dealer or Dodds Medicine Co., Buffalo, N. Y. Write for Household Hints, also music of National Anthem (English and German words) and recipes for dainty dishes. All 3 sent free. Adv.

New China Currency. The new Chinese dollars of the Chinese republic are objects of much curiosity among the natives. They carry English on the obverse side and Chinese on the reverse, with the picture of Dr. Sun Yat Sen, founder of the republic.

Significant. "He proposed to her in a canoe." "Did she accept him?" "I presume so. The canoe capsized."

Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup for Children teething, softens the gums, reduces inflammation, allays pain, cures wind &c. 10c. a bottle. Adv.

The faith that inspires is the trust which comes from our time-trusted friends.—W. S. Royston.

## THE CHILDREN'S HEALTH

In observing the physical characteristics of her children, the careful mother soon learns that health is dependent on the regularity of the bowels. When the bowels become clogged with the stomach's refuse, loss of appetite, restlessness, irritability, and similar evidences of disorder are soon apparent. Keep the bowels regular and a healthy, happy child is assured.

At the first sign of constipation the mother should administer a mild laxative to carry off the congested waste from the stomach that is fermenting and forcing poisonous gases into the system. A simple compound of laxative herbs with pepsin is highly recommended as being very mild, yet positive, in its action, a teaspoonful at bedtime usually serving to bring an easy, thorough, natural movement next morning. This compound is known as Dr. Caldwell's Syrup Pepsin and is sold by druggists everywhere for 50c a bottle. A larger bottle, put up especially for the family medicine chest, costs one dollar.

The use of salts and violent purgatives and cathartics should be avoided. They are too harsh and drastic, tending to upset the entire system. Write to Dr. W. B. Caldwell, 203 West St., Monticello, Ill., for a trial bottle of his Syrup Pepsin, if you have never used it. He will be glad to send it without any expense to you. Adv.

Wrong Guess. Nan—I've seen your new young man, and I should call him a diamond in the rough.

Fan—Well, he's susceptible of some polish, I'll admit, but you haven't classified him correctly; he's a Jasper.

## BE "Progressive"

Don't let a lazy liver put you "in a rut." Make it active, keep the bowels open, the appetite keen and the digestion normal by the daily use of

## HOSTETTER'S STOMACH BITTERS

IT DOES THE WORK 60 YEARS THE LEADER

Bettis Eye Salve. Quickly Ends Weak, Sore Eyes

W. N. U., LINCOLN, NO. 41-1912.

# Women

From Forty-Five to Fifty Are Much Benefited by Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound.

The "change of life" is a most critical period in a woman's existence, and the anxiety felt by women as it draws near is not without reason.

When her system is in a deranged condition, she may be predisposed to apoplexy, or congestion of some organ. At this time, also, cancers and tumors are more liable to form and begin their destructive work.

Such warning symptoms as sense of suffocation, hot flashes, headaches, backaches, dread of impending evil, timidity, sounds in the ears, palpitation of the heart, sparks before the eyes, irregularities, constipation, variable appetite, weakness and inquietude, and dizziness, are promptly heeded by intelligent women who are approaching the period in life when woman's great change may be expected.

These symptoms are calls from nature for help. The nerves are crying out for assistance and the cry should be heeded in time.

Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound is prepared to meet the needs of women's system at this trying period of her life. It invigorates and strengthens the female organism and builds up the weakened nervous system. It has carried many women safely through this crisis.



Mrs. Estella Gillispie

## ONE CASE OUT OF MANY TO PROVE OUR CLAIMS.

St. Anne, Ill.—"I was passing through the change of life and I was a perfect wreck from female troubles. I had a displacement and bearing down pains, weak fainting spells, dizziness, then numb and cold feelings. Sometimes my feet and limbs were swollen. I was irregular and had so much backache and headache, was nervous, irritable and was despondent. Sometimes my appetite was good but more often it was not. My kidneys troubled me at times and I could walk only a short distance.

"I saw your advertisement in a paper and took Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, and I was helped from the first. At the end of two months the swelling had gone down, I was relieved of pain, and could walk with ease. I continued with the medicine and now I do almost all my housework. I know your medicine has saved me from the grave and I am willing for you to publish anything I write to you, for the good of others."—Mrs. ESTELLA GILLISPIE, R.F.D. No. 4, Box 24, St. Anne, Illinois.