

HIS BEST CHUM

By EUNICE BLAKE

Johnny Hoxey, aged fourteen, went to bed one night with a splitting headache. The next morning he remained in slumber, and no effort to awaken him availed. He did not seem to be in pain, sleeping tranquilly. He remained asleep week after week, month after month and year after year. He needed very little food, and that was given him by various methods devised by the doctors. He slept seven years in the same room, in which no change was made during that time.

When Johnny went to sleep a little girl thirteen years old was his "best chum," as he called her. They were in the same class in the same school and used to study their lessons together. For Lucy Treadwell lived directly across the street from Johnny, and they had not far to go to reach each other. Lucy grew from childhood to womanhood, seeing almost daily a person of the opposite sex who was in a perpetual slumber.

One day Johnny showed signs of waking. For a week there was hope that he would do so, but those about him had been so often disappointed that they had lost confidence in his recovery. But he did awaken, and when he came to himself he was alone.

He lay for some time, after becoming conscious, with closed eyes, thinking of his sufferings "the night before," as he supposed it was, and feeling much relieved to be out of pain. Then he attempted to turn on his other side. He was surprised to find himself very weak. Lying in bed without using his muscles had taken his strength. While on his back he opened his eyes, still seeing nothing but the ceiling. Hearing a step in the room, he turned so that he could see a young woman sitting beside a window reading. She was unknown to him. When Johnny as a boy had awakened in the morning and did not have to go to school he usually lay in bed reading.

"Is this Saturday?" he asked. The girl started, and Johnny was astonished at the sound of his voice. The girl rose excitedly, came to his bedside, then ran immediately out of the room. Johnny in his amazement thrashed about and while doing so put his hand to his face. It was covered with hair.

"What in the world— he began. And, sitting up in bed, he saw in a mirror the reflection of a man. He was dumfounded. He moved, and the reflection moved. After it had followed several of his movements he covered his face with the bedclothes and gave way to a nervous chill.

Hearing persons hurrying into the room, he threw off the clothes. His mother, looking much older than "the night before," ran into the room, followed by the young woman, who had gone out of it and, taking him in her arms, sobbed:

"My dear boy! Heaven be thanked! "What is it, mother?" cried the affrighted John. "Something strange has happened! How big I am! How rough my voice! I seem to have grown to be a man overnight!"

"You have grown to be a man, dear, but not overnight. You went to bed one night when you were a boy and have slept continuously ever since."

There was silence for some time while a realization of this singular announcement was working its way into John's brain. Then he asked a dozen questions so rapidly that his mother found difficulty in answering one before another came forth. Finally he pointed to the girl, who seemed as much affected by his recovery as his mother, and asked who she was.

"She is—was—your best chum, Lucy Treadwell."

"Good gracious," exclaimed John wonderingly, "is that Lucy?"

"Yes, I'm Lucy. I've prayed for your waking ever since your long sleep began."

"She has been here nearly every day since your slumber began," said John's mother.

"And happened to be here when I woke," said John, and he put out both hands to her. "What a woman you've grown to be! How old are you—I mean how old am I?"

"You're twenty-one, and you know that I'm a year younger than you. That makes me twenty. Can you see any trace of your 'best chum' in me?"

"A trace only," replied John. "You were a pretty little girl then; you are a beautiful woman now."

Mrs. Hoxey said she must go and call the doctor at once. John must not get excited and take no action whatever till the doctor had seen him and given directions concerning him.

John obeyed the first injunction, but soon forgot all about the last. His mother had no sooner left the room than he reached for Lucy's hand and drew her to a seat beside him.

"So you have been here constantly since I have been in slumberland. Why did you come so regularly?" Lucy turned away her head.

"You were my 'best chum,' and you have proved yourself worthy of the name. I don't seem to know whether I'm boy or man. I remember the kiss I gave you yesterday—I mean before I went to sleep. I wonder, should I kiss you now, would it taste the same?" "I don't know," was the reply, the face still averted.

John put his arms about her, drew her down to him and kissed her. "It's worth a thousand of the others," he said.

A Dream Joke.

Almost every one has dreamed of writing a poem, delivering a speech or making a witty remark that seemed at the time wonderfully brilliant, but that, recalled on waking, proved to be either commonplace or wholly meaningless. That is not always the case, however, as this story, which the Rev. Washington Gladden is fond of telling, proves.

"I dreamed," says Dr. Gladden, "that the old house that formerly stood near my church was still there and that old Mr. Deshler, who has been dead many years, still lived in it. I also knew that his old dog, George, who never failed to bark at me when I passed the house, still lived. In my dream I was passing the house when the door opened and the old gentleman came out, followed by George, who, as usual, rushed barking up to me.

"Now, now, George," said the old man, 'you ought not to do that. You know that's a friend of ours. That's Dr. Gladden.'"

"Oh, I have met George before," I responded to the introduction. "In fact, George and I have for some time had a bowwowing acquaintance."—Exchange.

Riding in a Jirikisha.

When the European or American tourist first lands in Japan he at once demands a jirikisha. Having read of it and heard so much of it he wants an immediate experience of it as soon as he finds himself in the land of its birth. Almost any day one may see a procession of men and women, ashore for a day or two from a steamer in port, making their way up the crowded thoroughfares of Tokyo, sitting rather awkwardly in their jirikishas, trembling unbalanced over the axle, not knowing whether the thing is going to tip backward or fall forward, so loosely does the puller seem to hold the shafts. The first time one gets into a jirikisha he always feels like a baby, and this gawky sensation coupled with that of the uncertainty of one's position in balancing it, renders the experience not quite so pleasant as anticipated. But the only way for comfort is to sit back at one's ease and leave the responsibility to the man who pulls it.—Japan Magazine.

To the Manner Born.

In "Hamlet," act I, scene 4, occur these lines:

Ay, marry, 'tis.
But to my mind, though I am native here
And to the manner born, it is a custom
More honored in the breach than the observance.

Some have maintained that in this case "manner" should be spelled "manner," because the former was an old variant spelling of the latter. The phrase would then be applied to a person accustomed to the usages of a locality. But the weight of opinion favors "manner" as used, for instance, by Swinburne in the sentence, "He has not the eyes and nerves of one to the manner born." In this case the phrase refers to one having a lifelong acquaintance with given conditions and customs, regardless of whether they are associated with a single locality.—Philadelphia Press.

Source of Robinson Crusoe.

The Edinburgh Courant, long since dead, is worthy of remembrance, not only by Edinburgh and Scotland, but by the literary world at large. Its editors include Daniel Defoe, who seems to have been the first occupant of its editorial chair, to which he appears to have gone on his liberation from Newgate. "Old and New Edinburgh" mentions "the Edinburgh Courant of Oct. 16, 1707 (then edited by Daniel Defoe)," but Dr. Chalmers in his "Life of Defoe" says it is not suspected that he continued long to edify the Edinburgh citizens with his lucubrations. It was doubtless during his Edinburgh sojourn that Defoe heard all about Alexander Selkirk of Largo, the original of Robinson Crusoe.—London Chronicle.

Language of the Nose.

"Here is an article in the paper that says a woman's character can be determined by her nose."

"Well, there may be something in that, but there's a surer way. No one can make a mistake concerning a woman's character if he will look at the noses of other women who meet her. The extent to which they turn up at such times shows just what she is or isn't."—Exchange.

In the Same Boat.

Newlywed Husband—The time has come, dearest, when I shall have the painful task of acquainting your father with the fact that I am heavily in debt. Wife—Don't mind that. I'm sure he'll give you the sympathy of a companion in adversity.—London Telegraph.

Insulted Indeed.

"Why is Mrs. Van Wombat so angry with you?"
"It seems the cook she lured away from me is not satisfactory."—Kansas City Journal.

Her Scheme.

"Why does your fiancée study the bill of fare so long?"
"She wants to figure to me afterward how much I will save if we get married."—Meggendorfer Blätter.

Discoveries.

So many famous discoveries have turned out to be rediscoveries that we become cautious about asserting that any event or achievement was the first of its kind.—John Fiske.

Accomplished.

"Is he well versed?"
"Yes. He's a fool in many languages and on many subjects."—Philadelphia Ledger.

A Valued Pocket Piece

By JOHN Y. LARNED

My father was killed fighting on the northern side in the battle of Gettysburg, on the 2d of July. I was old enough to remember the news of his death and the military funeral that was given him when his body was sent home. Thirty years after his death I was paid a silver dollar bearing date of 1863. Since it marked the date of my father's death in battle, I prized it, and, instead of parting with it, I cut it out my father's initials.

One day while traveling I fell in with a young man, with whom I chatted. On entering the station at Cleveland the car door was thrown open and a trainman called: "Cleveland! All out!" The young man, surprised that the train would go no farther, made inquiries and discovered that he must stop overnight in Cleveland. He at once began to examine the contents of his pocketbook and found that he had barely enough to pay his bill at a hotel. I asked him to permit me to lend him some funds, but he refused, saying that he had just sufficient to get through. I insisted on his taking more, and he said if I had any loose change in my pocket he would accept it as a loan. The only coin I had was my pocket piece. After a moment's hesitation I handed it to him. He tried to get my address in order to return the loan, but we were leaving the train in a crowd, and I hurried away.

Not long after this the newspapers were filled with accounts of the murder of Richard Thornton, a wealthy man, in Buffalo. The case was one of those mysterious happenings that attract widespread attention. A nephew of the deceased, Edgar Thornton, was accused of murdering his uncle in order to secure his estate. The murdered man was very old, a bachelor, and his household affairs were administered by a Mrs. Ferguson, a widow, who, the evidence seemed to indicate, was endeavoring to induce him to make a will in her favor. The state attorney, by patching together bits of evidence, made a very good case, showing that the nephew, in whose favor a will had already been made, fearing that the woman would succeed in securing one giving her the property, had murdered his uncle to prevent his doing so.

Mrs. Ferguson swore that Edgar Thornton was with his uncle on the night of the murder, the two being together in the uncle's bedroom. She claimed to have heard high words between them. Edgar had left the house at 11 o'clock. She did not see Richard Thornton till the next morning, when she found him dead, with a pillow pulled over his face. A weak point in the prosecution was that some \$200 that the deceased had on hand in a desk was missing. The state attorney declared that the accused had taken the money in order to make it appear that the murder had been committed for the purpose of robbery.

I read the newspaper reports of the trial, missing only one day's report. The next issue of the paper mentioned that the accused had endeavored to prove an alibi.

The servants in the house were all against Mrs. Ferguson, testifying that she kept Mr. Thornton in a sort of imprisonment, but they were persons of no education, and their evidence was easily pulled to pieces by the prosecutor. Indeed, Mrs. Ferguson proved that they had been liberally tipped by Edgar Thornton whenever he had called on his uncle.

It did not take me long to make up my mind that the accused was guilty. He could not have been innocent unless Mrs. Ferguson had perjured herself in testifying that he was with his uncle, and the only person with him on the night of the murder.

I read the summing up of the case by the prosecutor, and my attention was attracted to these words:

The prisoner has claimed that on the night the murder was committed he was traveling on a train between Cleveland and Buffalo.

My meeting with the man to whom I had loaned a silver dollar flashed upon me. Could this Edgar Thornton be the person I had met? That person was to remain over in Cleveland at a hotel. The accused claimed to have been on a train.

A human life might depend on my action. I took a train for Buffalo and when I arrived went to the courtroom where the trial was being held. In the prisoner I recognized my fellow traveler. I called for his attorney, told my story and was put on the stand. I testified that on a certain date—the evening of the murder—I had entered Cleveland with the accused and had loaned him a silver dollar, which I described. The prisoner produced the identical dollar I had given him with the initials and date I had scratched on it.

There was a sensation in the courtroom. A man who was about to be convicted of murder was acquitted and was led to a fortune. When I asked how he happened to have been on a train instead of in a hotel in Buffalo he said he had found passage on a combination milk and passenger train. Mrs. Ferguson had perjured herself to be revenged on the man to whom she had lost her fortune.

When Edgar Thornton went to his home on his release he found it filled with flowers from sympathetic friends.

I have the pocket piece, more valued than ever.

Child Life in Africa.

Child life in Africa has few pleasures and many sorrows and is in a state of constant reversal and change. From the time of a boy's birth until he has gone through the "devil bush" he is little thought of, but as soon as he has passed through its terrible ordeals and practices he is regarded as a man and an asset in the native community. With a girl it is different. It is very hard to procure girls for the mission stations because they are considered specially valuable as workers and possible money bringers until the period arrives for them to enter and pass through the "gree-gree" bush ordeal. Then they are regarded as women and eligible for marriage, and their industrial value decreases. Still, if they rear large families, their market value keeps up in a measure, for in certain sections of Africa tribal custom permits a man to sell, loan or rent out his wives or keep them in household slavery or give them their freedom. Freedom is conferred by presenting the wife with the long tooth of a leopard, which indicates that she is no longer a slave, but a free woman, not a divorced wife.—Christian Herald.

A Bernard Shaw Criticism.

Before fame came to him Bernard Shaw wrote dramatic criticisms for the London Saturday Review. The following simile is characteristic of the man: "I am in a somewhat foolish position concerning a play at the Opera Comique, whether I was hidden this day week. For some reason I was not supplied with a program, so that I never learned the name of the play. At the end of the second act the play had advanced about as far as an ordinary dramatist would have brought it five minutes after the first rising of the curtain or, say, as far as Ibsen would have brought it ten years before that event. Taking advantage of the second interval to stroll out into the Strand for a little exercise, I unfortunately forgot all about my business and actually reached home before it occurred to me that I had not seen the end of the play. Under these circumstances it would ill become me to dogmatize on the merits of the work or its performance. I can only offer the management my apologies."

Eastern Vermont's Marbles.

Though the western part of Vermont includes the most extensive marble industry in this country, the eastern part is a virgin field, where, in the lack of a general study of the stratigraphy, the structure, the paleontology and the areal geology, it is at present not only impossible to determine the area and position of many of the beds, but also even the thickness of some of the marble formations, which are but partly exposed. The marbles of eastern Vermont, many of which are dolomitic, vary widely in kind and character, and the outcrops, though few in number, are scattered from the Massachusetts line to the Canadian boundary. Many of the marbles are suited only for interior ornamental use. The greater part of the ledge are to be classed as mineral reserves, which will be drawn on in the future.

Burial With Military Honors.

After a battle the dead are buried "with military honors." These in times of peace are both impressive and elaborate, but in time of war they are much curtailed. The principal features are the playing by muffled drums of the dead march, the resting on the arms reversed by the troops engaged and the final firing into the air over the grave of three blank volleys. The number of volleys is always the same, but the number of men comprising the firing party increases with the rank of the deceased. A muffled drum is a drum the cords of which have been loosened so as to slacken the parchment head and cause it to give forth on being struck a dull, muffled sound.—London Scraps.

Intellectual Life.

People without intellectual life are virtually under condemnation to hard labor. Unless their thoughts can give them wholesome occupation they must find it for their hands. Otherwise they cannot live well and must expect deterioration. But, unluckily for lazy people, the achievement of a good grade of intellectual life involves about as much work as anything else. Life without effort seems not to have been intended. The original plan was to have it end by starvation and, though people nowadays get around that, they cannot altogether defeat the original intention.—Life.

A Slight Absentmindedness.

"How are you getting on as the presiding officer of your new club?"
"Pretty well," replied the emphatic woman.

"No trouble with parliamentary points?"
"Not much. The only difficulty I have is to remember that you must bid on to the gavel and hammer with it instead of throwing it."—Washington Star.

Mean Suggestion.

"I made Miss Oldgirl mad the other day."
"How so?"
"She said she would give me a few wrinkles, and I said I didn't care to take them, although I knew she had plenty to spare."—Baltimore American.

In Awful Shape.

"Why don't you go to work?"
"I'm so dead tired of doing nothing that I'm too tired to do anything."—Cleveland Tender.

No great deed is done by falterers who ask for certainty.—George Elliot.

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