

# Which Was the Coward?

A Story of Southern Florida . . .  
By Helen Harcourt.

Bob was sitting on the porch looking out over the bay, whose waters were sparkling in the moonlight. He was not feeling happy. That was why he had stayed at home alone, rather than accompany his aunt and uncle to spend the evening in the village.

One of his school-fellows had tried to pick a quarrel with him. The rest had urged him on to fight. He had refused, giving as his reason a promise made to his dying mother, whose brother and husband had both fallen victims to a quick temper, that he would never fight with another except in self-defense. At this the other boys had laughed and called him a coward. This was the source of Bob's trouble. "In a nutshell," he thought it was a pretty hard nutshell, too.

But the worst of it was that he had come very near breaking his promise. It had taken all his self-control not to spring into the midst of those thoughtless, leering boys and fight the whole lot of them. He was a new-comer, had only lately come to live with his aunt and uncle in their Florida home. The boys did not know him very well, but some day, when he had a chance, he would show them that because a boy refuses to go into a senseless fight he need not be a coward.

"Hello, Bob," said the man who came to see if your uncle will lend him the big shears to prune the orange trees in the morning."

It was John Dunn who spoke, the very boy who had tried to make him fight, and had called him a coward.

"He's in the village," said Bob; "you will have to wait and ask him when he comes back, or else come over in the evening."

"Crash, bang, bump, the clatter of falling boards, the loud snort of a horse, and the hiss and roar of something that was not a horse, whatever it was, started for the stable whence came the noise.

"It can't be my pony kicking like that,"

ever again called Bob a coward. It was John who had reason now to hang his head.

### MR. GRAYTOP.

His Observations Upon the Cracking of Walnuts and Other Matters.

"There are doubtless living," said Mr. Graytop, "persons of mature years who remember cracking walnuts on a flat-iron, placing the point downward between the knees and cracking the nuts with a hammer on the head of the iron. There may even be persons who remember turning the handle down and cracking nuts on the bottom of the iron, when mother wasn't looking. Then came the nut cracker, and the old way of cracking nuts began to fall into disuse.

"It seems to me that we don't crack and eat walnuts around the fire so much as we used to, though perhaps I am mistaken in that. But I am quite sure of this; that while the modern nut cracker may save our fingers some, it can never have about it the associations of romance that cluster round the flat-iron and hammer.

"A man who wanted an apple, and who was at work at a desk, a window in the second story of a building in the city did not, as it might be supposed he would do, get up and put on his hat and go down to the street in search of a vendor to get one. What he did do was to throw up the window by his side and rising, throw one foot out

upon the coping that projected just under his window and over the door and windows of the first story. Looking down he saw in the street below, directly in front of the building, a licensed vendor with a push cart full of apples. To him he said 'Hi!'

"The push cart man looked up; the man above tossed down a nickel, which landed square in the center of the cart. It seemed as though the vendor knew this second story customer, for, without a word, he selected three fine red apples, which he threw one after another, to the man above, who caught them skillfully and then disappeared."

"In a city street the other day," Mr. Wingleby said, "I saw standing over a sidewalk grating, through which came a current of hot air from some engine room below, a little girl. In winter you see boys standing or lying on such gratings to get warm; this little girl was standing there for the fun of seeing her skirts round up like a balloon.

"When I was a boy, when schools were heated by furnaces with hot-air registers in the floor—as I suppose many are still—the girls used to flock over the registers to get warm when they were engaged. That one I lost overboard on a fishing excursion. Umbrellas lost ashore are of some use to somebody, but I didn't see what possible use that umbrella could be to the fishes."

### WHEN MOTHER LOOKS.

Letworth Smith in A True Republic.  
I remember such a lot of things  
That happened long ago,  
When my dear Jim was years old—  
An' now we're ten or so,  
But those I remember best—  
An' those the biggest kind of fun  
Are the things that used to happen  
When mother looked at me.

One time in church, when me an' Jim  
The minister was prayin' an'  
The people's heads was bowed—  
An' the people's feet was a-swingin'—  
But things got quiet rather quick  
When mother looked at me.

And then there's sometimes when I think  
I've hit such a high note,  
An' go in a swimmin' with the boys  
An' when I get back home again—  
Just 'bout in time for tea—  
When mother looks at me.

That time when I was awful sick  
An' the doctor shook his head,  
An' every time pa come around  
The doctor was wakin' me,  
I remember her hands on my face,  
How soft they used to be—  
When mother looked at me.

It's funny how it makes you feel—  
I ain't afraid of her,  
An' she's about the nicest person  
You'd find most anywhere;  
But the queerest sort of feeling,  
An' queer as queer can be,  
When mother looks at me.

### RATTLE OF THE YOUNGSTERS.

One of Omaha's little tots 3 years old, hearing her grandma and mamma talking of Thanksgiving day, realizing from the conversation that it meant a good dinner, such as grandma gets up, said to her mamma: "When will Thank God's day be here, mamma?"

He was a small boy—not such a very small boy—in an out-of-town school. He had written a composition. It was upon the subject of dogs. Now the teacher of the school was a man, and he was not popular. He was what the boys called "mean." They liked him thoroughly, from the tips of his shining shoes to the ends of his pompadour-combed hair. In the composition there was a story of a dog. It was the story of a literary effort, and as the composer of it emphatically and with great distinctness of utterance, and the hearts of all the other small boys in the room, as they listened, quaked, half with delight, and half with fear, knowing what was to follow, and gazing, fascinated, at the upright culture of the master, as the teacher ended. "And that dog was so mean that his hair stood on end."

Little 5-year-old Helen was lecturing her cousin, an Adelbert freshman, on the evils of foolishness, says the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

"Why," she said, "a big boy like you wouldn't be so foolish. I'd be ashamed to have so much foolishness about me."

"Why do you call him foolish?" inquired her uncle.

"Just 'cause he is," said Helen. "Why, if he keeps on he'll be half as foolish as his father."

And the poor uncle hadn't a word to say.

A charming young matron of the upper Sixth district is the mother of six lively children, all girls, says the New Orleans Times-Democrat. A few evenings ago, after dinner, while seated around the hearthstone, she and her husband became reminiscient, relating many happy episodes which occurred during that blisful period nearly all young people enjoy when they were engaged. That little group listened with lively attention was fully demonstrated the next day by a conversation between one of the younger children and a new wood vendor who had recently moved into the neighborhood and came around soliciting orders. The door bell rang, and one of the children, Anita, not waiting for the servant to answer, went to the door herself, when the following dialogue took place:

Wood Vendor—Good morning, little girl, is your mother engaged?

Anita (with astonishment)—Engaged! Why, my mamma is married, and has six children.

Exit wood vendor in confusion, amidst roars of laughter from the older children, who were listening behind the door.

Little Johnny was 8 years old, therefore he could look back to several Christmas holidays with a lively remembrance of what they were like, and what had taken place on these festive occasions.

One of Johnny's ideas (not original with Johnny by any means, as many a parent can testify) was that it is a boy's mission to make as much noise as possible in the world, and in spite of frequent admonishing and more or less frequent whippings, he perseveringly carried out the idea on all occasions, except when he was asleep.

Johnny was fulfilling his mission with more vigor and enthusiasm than usual on Christmas morning, relates Harper's Magazine, but nobody paid any attention to him except his Aunt Jane, who was visiting Johnny's parents during the holidays, and she finally grew tired of the noise and said:

"Johnny, it is very naughty to keep up such a din and racket all the time and if you don't stop it I shall have to speak to your mother about it."

"Huh! 'Wot good'll that do?" scornfully demanded Johnny.

"Why, she will whip you if you don't stop," threatened the young man's aunt.

"Guess not!" retorted Johnny, with an air of triumph. "Christmas ain't my day for gittin' whipped. I ailers get whipped the day before Christmas and the day after, but I never do on Christmas."

Patronize American goods, especially when you know they are the best, like Cook's Imperial Extra Dry Champagne.

HOLIDAY JOY.  
Washington Star.  
It was shortly after Christmas and the other suit of clothes.

When the father who so long has tolled in vain.  
Like the sail that's seen at last against a blank and cruel sky  
From the fragile raft adrift upon the mad, unsteady sea.  
Like the butterfly that flutters with a fascinating spell.  
Through the hours when shine and rose made up his day.  
A thing of radiant beauty, from its dark, unnoted cell.  
Came the dollar that I didn't know I had, and the faces pattered on it grew beneficent and kind.  
As the unfamiliar features caught my eye and I granted an exemption from the penalties we find.  
When the dollar had been paid by those who dance.  
How visions of small luxuries, dismissed with stern resolve.  
In economic righteousness full and.  
Came back, like gay kaleidoscopic figures to revolve.  
'Round the dollar that I didn't know I had.



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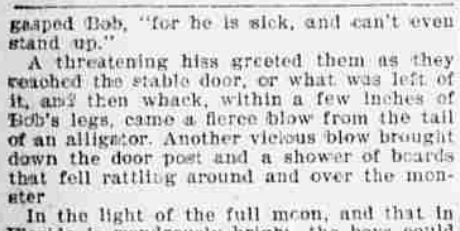
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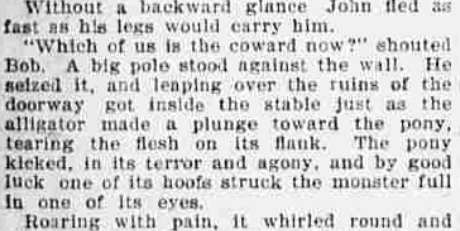
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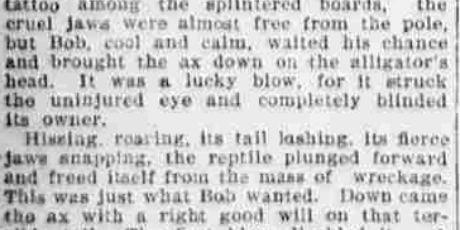
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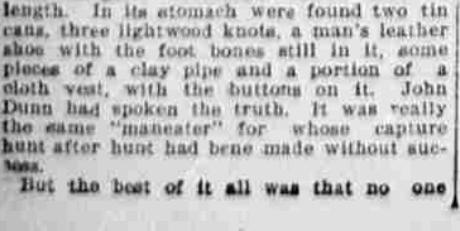
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THE OLD TIMERS.  
There is a peddler in New York who has recently acquired a third set of natural teeth and is about to celebrate the event by getting married.

Dr. Miner Raymond, who died lately in Chicago, was said to be the oldest theological student in this country. He began life as a shoemaker and ended at the head of the Garrett Biblical institute of the Northwestern university.

A Boston girl wants \$50,000 because a New Yorker refuses to marry her after promising to do so. The defendant's sole excuse is that his prospective mother-in-law always insisted on kissing him goodbye whenever he called.

Ex-President James H. Fairchild of Oberlin college celebrated his 80th birthday on Thanksgiving day. At the time of his resignation, in 1889, he was said to be the oldest college president in point of length of service in the United States.

Levi B. Paxson has been fifty years in the service of the Philadelphia & Reading Railroad company. He began as a brakeman of a coal train and is now at 70 years of age superintendent of motive power and equipment of the entire system.

Admiral of the British Fleet Sir Henry Keppel, now in the 86th year of his age and the seventy-sixth of his service, has lately undergone a serious operation, but his splendid constitution has held him through, and at last accounts he was making good progress toward recovery.

Joseph P. Elliott, aged 83, has just been admitted to the bar at Evansville, Ind. He has been for several years a justice of the peace, but had never studied law until he was elected to that office. The only member of the bar in Indiana who has more years on his shoulders is Colonel Dick Thompson of Terre Haute.

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