

HARD KNOCKS AT THE START

Bunch of Tough Luck Stories with a Rainbow Finish.

GAME OF CRAPS BRIGHTENS A PROSPECT

Experiences of Men in Various Avocations in Securing a Foot-hold on the Highway of Success.

(Copyright, 1902, by Mary R. Wheeler.) It was started by a chance remark at the dinner table. Two middle-aged brokers had been joking each other about being "squeezed" that day on the market, and he of the iron gray hair and yellow eyes indulged in a most plebeian wink at his vis-a-vis as he said:

"Never mind, old man; it was nothing compared with our first speculation that night in Boston."

"Finally there came a day when we were desperate. We had slept in a warehouse shed the night before and woke to face a dreary rain. Money we had none, and we were afraid that if we applied to the police we'd be booked as 'vags.' So we decided to spend the day in the common and look for money or articles of value that people might drop. It was a forlorn hope, but we followed it through puddles and showers, getting fainter each moment for lack of food. It wasn't a day for dropping valuables, and night found us in sad straits still. We were in no mood to talk, but at last, for the sake of saying something, I said to Bert:

"Well, I guess it's about time for us to take to a dark side street and hold up the first man that comes along. I'll never forget the expression on his face when he stopped in our dreary perambulation and faced me. It was absolutely tragic: 'Oh, I say, George, not just yet. Let's wait a little longer.'"

"I doubled up with laughter, and as I bent over something shiny on the pavement caught my eye. It was a dime. "We both clutched at it. Two sandwiches. Or two cups of coffee. Or two small pans of beans. Which should it be? Then the spirit of plunging, which has since brought my partner coins of the realm, seized him. Said he:

"Let's shake for it. If you get it, buy the grub. If I get it, I shoot craps with it with the first fellow I meet."

"He won and we repaired to the nearest cheap lunch joint where he actually did find a man who would gamble on the enormous sum of 10 cents. He doubled our capital and we had lunch. "Then what? Well, that seemed to be the turning point of our careers. The proprietor of the joint had spotted us, and before we had finished our 25-cent meal we were telling him our story. He put us in the way of work. By and by we came to our senses and let the folks at home know about it, and Bert's father, tickled with our grit, gave us a start."

A Helping Wife.

"Next," said the hostess with a laugh. The manager of a flourishing mercantile concern leaned forward.

"My good wife, heaven rest her soul, once helped me out of the tightest hole we were ever in," he began. "It was in a midwest city, then in its youth, that I stranded as a life insurance agent. How we managed to exist for a few weeks in a so-called furnished room I will not attempt to describe, but we finally got down to our last \$5, which I was while doing our paltry washing, remarked:

"Just see what a lather this soap makes. It is the best brand I ever used."

"I watched the white foam on her hands and suddenly the inspiration came. "Peggy," I exclaimed, "that soap must save us. I'm going to do it up in little packages and sell it on the streets after dark as a lightning cleanser. Now, how can we turn the trick?"

"The family washing was suspended then and there and she set down with me to figure it out. Before long my last \$5 and I were on the street. I bought three dozen bars of the soap, which is white and of a brand that you all know, a roll of tinfoil, some tissue paper and several fine, small sponges. "Once back in our room my wife and I went to work hard and fast, for afternoon was at hand. Taking the sponges we wet them thoroughly and rubbed them hard over the soap until they were saturated with suds. Then, without rinsing them, we placed them above the stove to dry. Next we carefully scraped off the bars the imprint of the soap maker, washed the surfaces to make them perfectly smooth and glossy, cut each cake into five small flat ones and wrapped these carefully in tissue and tinfoil. That night I took up my stand on the corner, the soap in tinfoil piled on one hand and the dry sponges with a basin of water on the other.

"Well, I proceeded to demonstrate the 'sudsing' quality of that soap until the eyes of the entire crowd seemed to bulge out. Of course, when the sponges were wet the old fellow got in his work, and then when I barely touched it on the sample cake there was something doing all over my hands and clear down to the ground. "Did I sell the soap? Well, rather, and at 50 cents a cake. And then in the solemn hour of midnight we boarded a train with the proceeds of the scheme and quietly stole back to the old farm."

Stranded Far from Home.

"There is a reminiscent glow in the eyes of Mr. Stevens," said the host, waving his hand in the direction of a well known singer, who instantly became the center of interest. He began:

"I'm from New England, as you know, and my family was opposed to my adopting the musical profession. So I promptly ran away and joined the chorus of a second-rate opera company. Of course, the company selected San Francisco, the jumping off place, to get stranded in, and with my utter inexperience I was soon up against it in dead earnest. One day I got a date at a variety house, though I felt that I wouldn't make good, as they say in the profession. If I survived my first appearance as a soloist I would do well. This thought, with the fact that I'd had nothing to eat for twenty-four hours, plunged me into the depths once more, when I heard a wail in a feminine voice:

"Oh, dear, the stage manager says I can't even rehearse because I have no orchestration for my song. What shall I do?"

"Hunger is a marvelous inspiration. My brain worked fast. I approached the young woman, a typical variety hall singer, and said: "Perhaps I can assist you. I am Prof. Stevens of Boston. It does not require

too much work, I will make an orchestration for you." The girl almost hugged me in her delight, for rehearsal hour was at hand. "Oh, that will be lovely," she cried. The song is dead easy. How quick can you do it? I'll give you \$3 if you'll have it ready for the rehearsal!"

"I glanced through the song with eyes that saw not, stole some sheets of blank music paper from a nearby music stand and asked for twenty minutes in private. Then I shot out to a chop-house and scattered notes over that paper—halter-skelter, any old way, and on any old line or space. I never once ran through the tune. What was the use? I knew no more about orchestration than does our hostess' Japanese spaniel. But I got the \$3 per agreement and escaping the profuse thanks of the singer, slipped back into the street. There would be no rehearsal for me. Three dollars in the hand was worth two prospective variety engagements, and besides I did not think it would be healthy for me when the leader of the orchestra tried that music. "A little later I slipped around to the front of the house, passed the scrub women and secreted myself in the darkest corner of the auditorium. I will never again hear such discord as when the orchestra started in upon that singer's turn; and the memory of the profanity which rent the air when the leader realized the true state of affairs is unparalleled in my personal history. "Later, when good fortune came my way, I sent the young woman her \$3 and explained my desperate need at the time. She's on Broadway now in a musical comedy. I dined with her the other night and we made merry over the day, when she had money and I had none."

Struck a Snag.

The tale of woe was taken up by an actor whose name appears in large type on the play bills.

"I, too, was once stranded in San Francisco and had to choose between clean linen and a square meal. The latter I had not dared to take for more hours than I cared to mention here, because I was down to just 75 cents and was actually afraid to spend it.

"But I also realized that my soiled linen advertised my dire straits to any manager I approached, so at last the scales tipped in the direction of a clean shirt. But how was I to get it, a collar and a pair of cuffs, for 75 cents? Wearily I walked my desperate need at the time. She's on Broadway now in a musical comedy. I dined with her the other night and we made merry over the day, when she had money and I had none."

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"Now, the funny part of it was that the play proved really good and by dint of hard work we secured an angel and I got together a company, most of them caught, like myself, on the coast, and we toured the state. The 'angel' never got back his money, but the playwright received his royalties and some local fame, while I and my fellow players lived off starvation until, one by one, we found berths in good companies that were going back to New York."

A Woman's Story.

The woman on the right of the host asked for the floor—and got it, of course. "I know a woman now prosperous who once turned her thoughts to suicide and was saved by the infectious comedy of a dear little comedienne, long since gone to her last reward."

"This woman had written on small papers in a western state and, full of ambition and really capable, she made her way to Denver. But instead of securing a place on a daily paper she found herself each day nearer the penniless condition. In those times free lancing was unknown in Denver, and she was desperate. At last she was down to \$2. Moody, almost distraught in a whimsical moment, she rushed off to the theater, spending 75 cents for a rear balcony seat. Patti Ross was the attraction, and Jolly Joe Cawthorne was her support. The woman who had felt that she must go to the theater and forget or throw herself into Cherry creek laughed until she cried and went home with a sense of cheer and determination that was not to be depressed by an empty stomach. "The next morning she bought a good breakfast and went to an office known as the Helping Hand, where strange women could secure positions presumably on their personal word and honor. The only thing offered was a post as housekeeper and the woman of pen and pencil jumped at it. Fortunately her prospective employer was a semi-invalid, and was as ready to jump at help as the woman was at work. "She began her duties that same afternoon, and here was where the American woman's adaptability shone forth. She had not done housework for years, but she studied her cookbook into the small hours of the night, devised menus, superintended the cooking, catered to the whims of the semi-invalid, kept a 'comedy' corner for the

head of the house when he came home tired, and, by her tact, hid the fact that housekeeping was not her long suit. "It was the husband who first suspected that she was a bit out of her sphere. The wife was too wrapped up in herself to notice anything. One day the man bluntly asked the housekeeper to tell him the truth about herself, and she did frankly. "Now, I hold that that man deserves the title of one of nature's noblemen, because when he was being looked after as he admitted he never had been in years, and when his home was running smoothly, he deliberately sacrificed all this to recommend the woman he thought deserving of better things to his personal friends high in Denver newspaper circles—and she left his house, not, however, without some feeling of genuine regret, to take up the work that she really loved."

LABOR AND INDUSTRY.

Paris waiters have revolted against the system which have made a union demand for regular wages. Amalgamated Association of Street Railway Employees has gained the \$2,000 mark in membership. Five years ago it had less than 5,000. Australia has gone farther than any other country in the restriction of immigration. Its new law shuts out yellow labor, Kanakas and East Indians. Glass Cutters' Union of America is calling the attention of manufacturers to the employment of women in this work and asks that it be discontinued by January 1. A system of superannuation for its employees is about to be put into effect by the Canadian Pacific Railway company. The sum of \$250,000 has been designated a pension fund. Thirty-seven labor papers have been started in the last twelve months. There are at present 27 strictly union labor papers in the United States. This indicates the growth of unionism. Nearly 1,300 employees of the American Cigar company in Cincinnati, mostly girls, will receive an increase of about 30 per cent in wages coming January 1. The rate, it is stated, will extend to all factories of the company throughout the country. Of the 2,313 unions making returns to the office of the American Federation of Labor for the month of October, 1902, the aggregate membership of 182,354, there were 6.9 per cent out of employment. In September 1, 118 unions, with an aggregate membership of 88,994, reported 13 per cent out of employment. The referendum vote of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners on the question of separating the offices of secretary and treasurer, was carried by a large majority. This makes Thomas Neale the national treasurer, as he was elected to the office at the last convention pending the result of the referendum vote. The supreme court of Ohio decided the other day that the eight-hour law was unconstitutional and declared it null and void. The decision came up on a test case limiting the length of the working day unconstitutionally, while others held them valid. Referendum ballot by the United Association of Journeymen Plumbers, Gas and Steam Fitters of the United States and Canada has decided that after January 1 the dues shall be increased to 30 cents a week. The project for equalizing the matter of sick, death, strike and superannuated benefits was adopted. There had been no uniformity in this matter and some locales paid no benefits. The establishment of a nine-hour work-day for the iron molders of the country has been deferred for the present. The matter will be taken up next January by a joint committee representing the National Foundrymen's association and the Iron Molders' Union of North America. At the recent conference held on the matter at Detroit it was agreed by both sides that they were not ready to fully discuss the proposition, and it was postponed by mutual consent.

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