His Promise Fulfilled

By EWART PARRETT

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THE long freight slowed to a stop at the small station on the outskirts of St. Albans. Bob Jefferies swung himself from the engine cab and for a moment gazed ahead, where directly in his path, vast sections of the forest burned fiercely.

The night agent stood on the platform, a slip of paper in his left hand, a revolver in his right. "Bad news, Bob," he called warily as Jefferies approached.

The engine driver sprang up beside him. "Yes? But how's the track? Can I get through tonight?" Then noting the revolver he demanded. "What's the trouble?"

The night agent's face was fraught with anxiety. "This wire is from the chief," he replied. "You are to put No. 13 on the siding here. It is impossible to proceed further. And say!"—he stepped closer, his low voice harsh with anger—"Two bandits held up the State bank at Barton this afternoon and one of the murderous devils shot down a little girl in cold blood! They were seen to jump your train as you passed through Barton."

Jefferies muttered a fierce oath. "Well, one thing is certain," he growled. "If I brought them this far, they won't travel much further tonight!"

"I'm going to find out if they came," declared the agent.

Jefferies leaped down to the rails. "Wait a moment!" he cried. "I'll put the old bus on the siding, then I'll join you."

Some five minutes later, two men slunk from the shadows across the tracks and under cover of the noise made by the shunting train hastened up the road leading to the village.

The elder man, Tom Guthrie, had been wounded in fighting off their pursuers at Barton. He turned weakly to his companion and asked, "Where are we, Bill?"

"In Canada, I believe," replied Ryerson.

"Let's move," muttered Guthrie. "I'm getting worse." Without warning, he fell heavily to the road.

As Ryerson lifted up the wounded man, a shout rang out from the station.

Guthrie stirred painfully. "They've seen us! Hide me somewhere! They must not take me alive!"

Ryerson perceived the dim outlines of an isolated barn just ahead and close to the road. With a grunt, he threw the other across his shoulder, and trudged towards the structure.

After a silence that seemed interminable, Guthrie opened his eyes, 'Bill?'

"Yes, Tom?"

"Bill! I wanted that money for my daughter, Bessie. I wanted to give her the things in life, her mother never had. And now that—that other girl—so like my Bess—dead!" His voice died in a whisper.

Guthrie strove to sit up. "I want you to bury me in a grave on which little girls will place flowers and pray over me! Promise me! Quick!"

"I promise you, Tom."

The frail body relaxed suddenly and was still.

A streak of light stole across the eastern sky. Outside, under the waning light of the stars, Ryerson mopped the sweat from his brow. Stumbling across the road, he opened a rusty little gate, which lead directly into a graveyard. A small church-like building loomed through the mist. He entered the building and carefully struck a match. His eyes gleamed as he surveyed the interior of the single room. Then, softly closing the door, he retraced his steps to the barn. In the afternoon sunlight, a few hours later, the grounds of the cemetery were packed with humanity. Most of the inhabitants of St. Albans were there, from the oldest to the youngest. Two days previously their school had burned to the ground, snuffing out the lives of eight pupils and their teacher.

The children stood in groups around a single, large grave, into which nine coffins had just been placed. Eight of the caskets were small and of uniform length. The ninth, however, was full size and containing as it did, the charred, unrecognizable remains of a young woman, bore mute evidence to her desperate courage. And yet, to those who lowered it, this larger coffin had seemed exceedingly heavy! Careful hands had carried the caskets from the small building close by.

The grave was slowly filled in. On the edge of the crowd a tall, bareheaded stranger watched the ceremony intently. He saw a line of little girls approach and place flowers on the long mound of fresh earth.

The stranger turned swiftly, as a voice hissed in his ear. "You are under arrest! Come quietly!"

"Now tell me," threatened Jefferies when they reached the roadway. "Where is your companion—the one who wounded the girl at Barton?"

Ryerson's heart leaped. Wounded—not killed! "We separated last night," he lied slowly. "I never saw him again. He ran into the woods in that direction." He pointed to what was only blackened, smoldering countryside.

Jefferies nodded slowly to the detective at his side. Then turning to Ryerson, he said gruffly, "Let's go!"

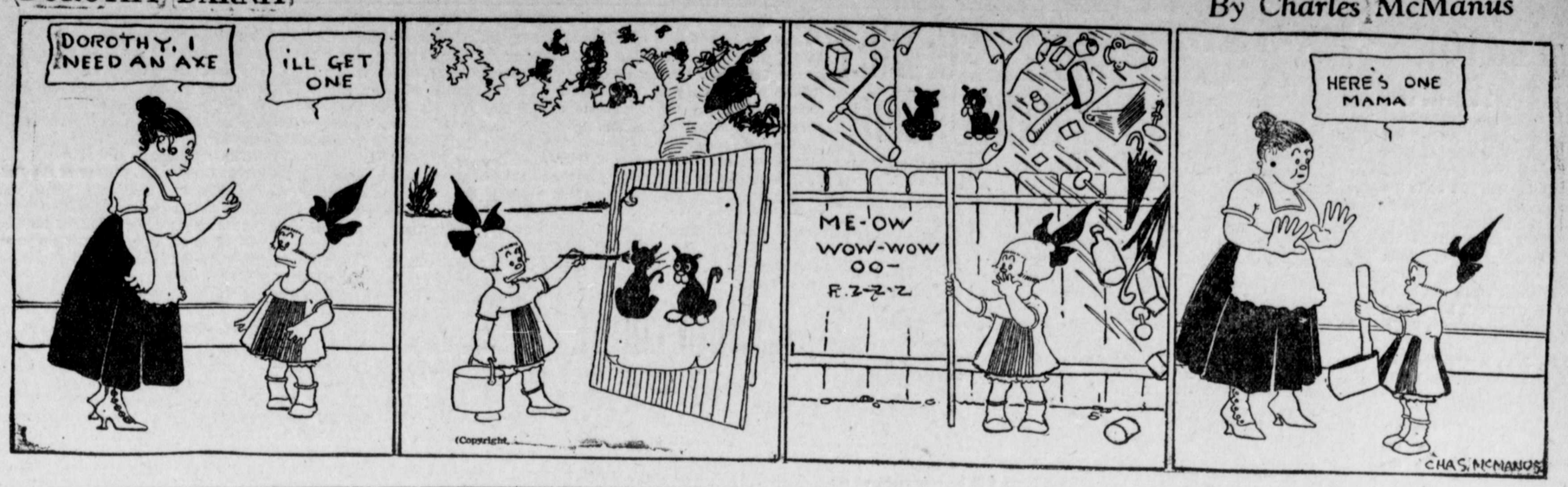
Silently, the three men turned down the road to the station.

Bantu Tribe Increases

The Bantus of South Africa were the latest of the native inhabitants who entered South Africa. They all speak dialects of the Bantu language, but racially they vary considerably with certain negro characteristics predominating. They seem to have originated as a distinct variety somewhere in the neighborhood of the Great Lakes and to have migrated south at various times between the Twelfth and Fifteenth centuries. The Bantu peoples are vigorous, powerful and increasing in numbers.

DOROTHY DARNIT

By Charles McManus



Scared Them to Death

Some of our local sportsmen may have had a similar experience with the high cost of duck shooting as a Winnipeg man's report of one day on the marshes. This nimrod fired seventy-five shells, costing $3.75. His gasoline for the trip cost $2.25 and his hunter's license $2. His bag was three ducks, or $2.60 per duck. As there was no evidence of pellets in the birds, it is believed they died of heart failure caused by the barrage.—Vancouver Province.

Ocean Weather Reports

The idea of receiving weather reports from vessels at sea was inaugurated in 1906, when the captains of 50 vessels flying the Pacific with the necessary radio equipment agreed to make the observations and endeavor to transmit their reports to Washington each day. This is now done by 250 sea captains, and about 50 messages are received every day. These observations have proven very valuable, and a small fee is paid for each observation made and successfully transmitted to Washington.

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English Laws Explicit as to "Leap Year" Rule

One of the curious complications caused by the addition of an extra day every fourth year is the creation of a calendar date which occurs only once in four years. He who is born on February 29 has, in a strictly technical sense, no birthday save during leap years. In 1910 this prank of the calendar makers came in for a legal dispute when an English father of a son born on February 29 asked whether his son would attain his legal majority twenty-one years after his birth, despite the fact that in that time he would have had only five technical birthdays.

First reference to the law indicated that the boy would have only one legal birthday every four years. Blackstone's language was unequivocal, stating that a man child attains his majority "on the day preceding the twenty-first anniversary of the person's birth."

But further search revealed a law among the statutes of King Henry III, made at Westminster in 1236. The language was ambiguous, the text antique, but the lawyers insisted it left no doubt about its intent. By saying, " . . . the day increasing in the leap year shall be taken and reckoned on the same month wherein it groweth, and that day, and the day next going before, shall be accounted for one day," King Henry had meant that the boy should have a legal birthday on February 28 in all except leap years.

Egyptian Monarch Was First Wheat Dictator

The first recorded wheat dictator was Henku, monarch of Egypt, who apparently considered it his most worthy claim to fame, having "I was lord and overseer of southern grain!" engraved on his tomb. A study on food control for forty-six centuries was made by Mary G. Lacy, librarian of the United States Department of Agriculture, and this is the most ancient deed of price fixing which she unearthed from the musty tomes.

The story of the pharaoh and his treasurer Joseph, who ran the first recorded wheat corner, is known to all Bible readers, but he was in 1700 B. C., centuries later than Henku. The Egyptian method of control was by the monarch owning all the land, similar to the government ownership in the Soviet union today.

China as early as 1122 B. C. had a system of crop and price control, chiefly concerned with rice. The government bought the surplus after inspecting each field and deciding how much each farmer might keep. It bought at a normal price in surplus years and sold at the same price in short years, protecting the farmer in one and the consumer in the other.

Place of Tragic Memory

The Black Hole of Calcutta is the popular name of a cell in Fort William, Calcutta, formerly used as the guard room.

On the night of June 19, 1756, the season when the tropical heat of Calcutta is most oppressive, Suraj-ud-Dowlah, the nineteen-year-old nabob of Bengal, who had broken with the British authorities, thrust 146 employees of the British India company into this cell, a room 18 feet long by 14 feet, 10 inches wide. It had but two small windows covered with iron bars and obstructed by a veranda. The heat and lack of air killed 123 of them before morning.

The site of this cell is now covered with a black marble slab, and the event is commemorated by a monumental shaft erected in 1902.

Great Land Purchase

The Louisiana Purchase was the first territory acquired by the United States. It was purchased from France in 1803 and comprised the Mississippi river's west side drainage basin, except that part held by Spain. It extended from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico and included areas now occupied by Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Iowa, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska, the Dakotas, Montana, most of Minnesota and portions of Colorado and Wyoming. The United States took formal possession of the Louisiana Purchase regions on March 10, 1804, and congress divided it into two parts—the territory of Orleans (later the state of Louisiana), and the territory of Louisiana.

From Popular Opera

Sir Arthur Sullivan wrote the music to "Hail, Hail, the Gang's All Here." It was taken from the Gilbert and Sullivan operatta, "The Pirates of Penzance." The melody used occurs in act 2, song 12—Samuel and chorus of pirates—beginning, "Come, friends, who plough the sea," etc. This melody is exactly as it was written in the operetta, but begins in the middle of the chorus. Theodore Morse made a slight change in the notes at the end of the present arrangement.

Jealously Kept Secret of Dessert Delicacy

While the rest of England walked hungrily by, the haughty Charles I, guarding the secret of the recipe with great care, sat in his pantry cramming himself with luscious ice cream. The greedy monarch, fearful lest the recipe might "leak out," pensioned his French cook, De Mirco, who first made ice cream for him, with a bountiful supply of "hush money" to keep the process secret.

The first recipe for ice cream is reported to have been published in Rome by Quintus Maximus Gurges. Water ices and milk ices were introduced into Europe from Asia by Marco Polo. After this introduction, it was popular at the banquet tables of royalty in Germany, France and England. The first wholesale ice cream business was introduced by James Frussell, of Baltimore, according to the National Dairy council. He owned a dairy and utilized the surplus cream for making ice cream. The sideline soon proved more profitable than the original milk business. Although still a dish for kings, ice cream is now enjoyed by almost every one. Last year every person in this country ate approximately 100 dishes of this American dessert, ice cream.—Wallace's Farmer.

Chimpanzee Proved He Had Curiosity, Anyway

Some time ago a scientist was anxious to discover whether chimpanzees possessed any power of reasoning. In the cage of one of them he hung a banana out of the ape's reach. He also placed in the cage two or three wooden boxes. The chimpanzee took a long while to think it out, eventually he placed one box on top of another, stood on the pile and reached the banana.

Then the scientist gave him another test, but it occurred to him that the chimpanzee might think more quickly if he was not being observed. The chimpanzee was placed in a room, and the scientist, going outside, put his eye to the keyhole to watch the proceedings. He was amazed to find that he was looking into another eye. The chimpanzee had got there first!

Chimpanzees seem to have some kind of reasoning power, and many believe that if taken in hand young enough they could be educated to a remarkable degree.

Scientists Study Python

Snakes are cold-blooded animals, both traditionally and by actual scientific measurements, always appreciably chillier than their suroundings; yet a female python in the National Zoological park, at Washington, that laid a clutch of eggs and tried to hatch them literally warmed up to her maternal task by becoming measurably warmer than her environment. These observations were reported before the meeting of the National Academy of Sciences, by Dr. Francis G. Benedict, and associates, of the Carnegie institution, of Washington. An incubating python in captivity is such a rare phenomenon that special studies with electrical heat-recording instruments were considered desirable when the Washington python provided the opportunity.

Means Wasted Effort

The old expression "carrying coals to Newcastle" is thus explained: Newcastle is a center of the British coal trade, and a great port for the shipping of it. To "carry coals to Newcastle" is a waste of labor, a futile, or unnecessary effort, an effort to supply a need already well supplied. The phrase is of Seventeenth century origin, or perhaps older. But similar proverbs exist in many languages. There is one in French about "carrying water to the river." Ancient Greece has one about taking owls to Athens—Athenian coins being stamped with the owl; and an oriental poet speaks of "importing pepper into Hindustan."

"Pannage" Old Custom

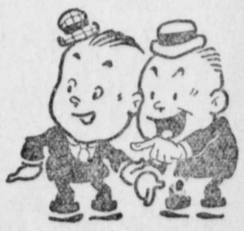
During the time of pannage—the legal term for the feeding of swine in a wood or forest—each commoner can turn his swine into the new forest for a period of four weeks. This custom is one of the oldest in England, says an article in the Montreal Family Herald. In early times forest-fatted pigs were thought the best for breakfast, and even men were considered to benefit and their strength increase if they had an acorn diet. "Pigs in pannage" was one of the most preciously guarded privileges during the feudal days, and one of the few to survive until today.

First Friction Matches

In 1680 ignition of sulphur and phosphorus by friction was discovered by Godfrey Haukwitz, but it was nearly a hundred and fifty years before this discovery was applied to matches. The year 1827 saw the first really useful friction match, made by an Englishman—John Walker, a druggist of Stockton-on-Tees. In 1836 the first improved friction matches were made in the United States by Alonzo Phillips of Springfield, Mass.

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"What's Jones So Puffed Up About ?"

IT'S an old, old, story . . mates. A few months ago, Jones was one of that short-sighted group that figured "Advertising just a waste of money." His business went from bad to worse until, in desperation, he decided to "try it just once."

The results were so gratifying, that he's been ADVERTISING CONSTANTLY ever since. No wonder he's smiling and content now.

Moral:

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