



THE PRODIGAL SON

By JAMES F. DWYER

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"IT COMES to every wanderer at some time in his wanderings," said Galt, looking out through the dirty window of Bhatto Ghan's River Alley restaurant at Singapore. "It comes to every one of us drifters, and when the voice is strong enough we strike the home trail."

"Ay, ay," murmured Maloney, a little red-headed Irishman, who acted as agent for a Jew firm at Calcutta. "It's right you are, Sandy."

"There is no such person as a cosmopolitan," growled the big Scotchman. "I thought I met one once when we were jerking a trestle bridge over a stream up at Simla, but he was a fraud. He left one night and when I went round to his bungalow in the morning I found a little scrap of paper stuck in the thatch. It just read: 'Gone home to England.' Yes, by the ax of Bruce, that was all—not another word. And that sun-tanned devil had been telling me month after month that he had neither home nor country."

"Ay, ay," chanted Maloney. "I've said the same, bad luck to me." "I cursed him over-right, the Lascar serang," continued Galt, "but that old monkey-faced nigger told me to stop. 'His mother looked at him last night,' said he. 'His mother is in England, d—n his brown hide,' I growled. 'It doesn't matter,' squeaked that old bag of bones, 'his mother has been seeking him for years, and last night she looked into his eyes as he slumbered, and he has gone to her. It is always so, Sahio. Some day the mother's eyes will find them if they sit on the rim of the earth, and when they see her in their dreams they go back.'"

Galt banged his glass upon the century-old table, and when Bhatto Ghan had delivered the drinks, a silence fell upon the group. The hot sun turned the street puddles into vapor masses that floated upwards, thick and stifling, and the voices from the cafe chantant came through in intermittent bursts as if they had seized favorable moments when the air was clear.

There were five in the party, and no man was within three thousand miles of his birthplace. It was Maloney's recital of an attempt he made to reach Cork that had caused the Scotchman to make his observations. The little Irishman had shipped as a stoker on a big P. & O. boat at Melbourne, but the red mouths in the bowels of the ship had eaten up his home-longing before he reached Colombo. There, Maloney deserted, and deferred the pleasure of re-visiting Queens-town till his pocket could pay for superior traveling accommodation.

Presently Meehlin shifted his long legs and knocked the ashes from his pipe.

"That's right about the voice," he said, with the air of a man who knows that his assertion is incontrovertible. "I know all about the voice. I struck Wellington, New Zealand, in 1900; rode down on a leaking wind-jammer from Vancouver, and the voice found me the moment I was on the quay. One of the New Zealand Steamship company's boats was just getting ready to buck across to Sydney, and the voice made me buy a forty-shilling steamer ticket 'an' hike aboard. Every mile of that trip the voice got to whisper 'stronger.' 'Jimmy,' it said, 'you haven't seen yer old mother for seven years—seven years. Just think of it. Never mind about yer stepfather, Jimmy; don't think of yer little differences with him. If he kiks yer again, like he did before, don't take any notice of him.' That was the tune it sang to me. Oh, yes, Galt is Johnny-on-the-spot when he gives lingo about the voice. It gets you all right. The one that called me was a soft of two-thousand-mile radius voice. While I was buzzin' about up around Seattle I didn't hear it, but the moment I struck windy Wellington, it fairly poured into me sound accumulators, and before we sighted Sydney Heads I couldn't get any sleep at night because it kept reproaching me for stayin' away too long."

"The moment I tumbled onto the wharf, the voice whirled me up George street to the railway station. I bought a second-class ticket for Borke, and then went across the road to get something to eat before the Western Mail pulled out for its run to the Darling. I couldn't eat; felt as if I had a balloon in me insides, so I came back and cursed the porters until we swung out. All the way up in the train that voice made me sick with joy. The old bare guntrees, the ti-tree scrub, the grey plains, the dusty drovers, every blottin' thing got tuggin' at me heart-strings, 'an' when I got out at Bourke I felt all sore round the ribs like as if some one had been slamin' me with sixteen-ounce gloves."

Maloney made a sound that resembled a suppressed sob, and Meehlin looked at him curiously.

"My dad had been a cockatoo selector, you know. We had a little patch between two big patches, and the squatters on the two big lots hated dad like poison. When he died, mother married McCarty just to have a man round the place to give back lip to the boundary riders, and it was that little mean-souled son-of-a-gun who snapped my home cable 'an' set me driftin' in the first place. However, the voice told me to forget all that, 'an'

tried to pump my right hand up 'an' down like a feller that's tryin' to restore breathin' in some guy who has been in the wet, but I took it agreeable, 'an' you could hear the swish of the wings of peace when I was telling about me wanderings."

"Next day that little knock-kneed hound of a stepfather asked me to give him a hand in poleaxing a steer, and I agreed to whip the pelt off just to show him I hadn't forgotten the game. I was three parts through with the job when the door of the shed opened and a mounted trooper covered me with his popgun. The voice wasn't doing much calling at that minute. You see, Stepdad hadn't a calf of his own to kill in honor of my return, so he had grabbed one of the nearest squatters 'an' that cop caught me red-handed. Cattle duffing had been getting too common, 'an' they were watching round. The cop took me 'an' he took Stepdad, too, tied us one to each stirrup iron. That was pretty good luck for McCarty."

"They must have seen I was in a bit of a temper, 'cause they put us into two different cells, but there was a little hole in the slabs, 'an' all through the night that old calf-stealer kept asking me to shoulder the blame of the whole show. 'They didn't catch me, Jimmy,' he kept on saying, over 'an' over again. 'They only caught you, Jimmy. What's the good of two of us going in? Who'll look after your mother, Jimmy? Who'll shear the sheep? Who'll keep yer little brother at school, Jimmy? It wasn't the voice that pulled me aboard the steamer Wairapa that I heard that night. He got me that mad that I poked my finger in his eye when he was looking through the hole, 'an' I got a little peace after that."

"Well, that jury believed McCarty. They sent that old scoundrel back home, and a new voice came to my ears. It was the voice of the trail that called me day 'an' night for two years while I lay in Dubbo jail, 'an' when I used to look at the guards on the wall I swore I'd never imitate the prodigal son again. Those were the three kinds of voices I heard. First, the voice that calls you home—the one Galt was tellin' you about; secondly, the voice of that old calf-stealing cuss in Bourke lock-up; and thirdly, the voice of the trail."

Maloney broke the silence. "Did you go back—afterwards?" he asked.

"Did I?" cried Meehlin, the arm muscles bunching under the sleeves of his coat. "No, I was afraid. I was afraid that I might kill him or that he might kill another calf. One of the two things might have happened, 'an' I would have got the worst of the deal. I'm off calves 'an' stepfathers for all time."

He stood up, stretched his great frame, and walked down to the water front where craft of all nations rocked in the yellow waters, their masts, like gigantic fingers, beckoning to stay-at-home folk to whom the trail had never called.

Truth Truly Sometimes Stranger Than Fiction

The Strand Magazine once published among its "Curiosities" a photograph of an American Indian boy who was born without arms and was giving exhibitions in England of shooting with a bow and arrow with his toes. This number of the magazine actually reached the boy's father, a Red Indian, dwelling somewhere in the wilds of North America. He recognized the picture of his son, of whom he had lost sight for years. The joy of the boy's family on learning that he was alive and making a career for himself may be imagined. It is difficult to say which is the more extraordinary—the fact of an English magazine reaching so very unlikely a reader or the almost incredible coincidence of his finishing his son's portrait in it.

There are many remarkable birth coincidences on record, but perhaps the most outstanding is that concerning the family of Mrs. White of North Hill, Fareham, Hants, who is the proud mother of six children, all of whom celebrate their birthday anniversary on the same day! Here are the facts: Daughter born July 27, 1886; triplets born July 27, 1901; twins born July 27, 1902.

What is more remarkable still is that they were all born between 4 and 5 o'clock.

Plague Deadly Ravages

The plague, one of the greatest in history, ravaged London in 1665. It carried off nearly one hundred thousand persons. The population of the city at the time numbered about one-half million; hence it will be seen that one-fifth of the inhabitants perished. Fires were kept burning night and day to purify the air. The infection was not, however, entirely stamped out until the great fire of the following year. The plague is supposed to have been introduced into England by certain Dutch merchants, and to have been brought into the city in bales of cotton. Daniel Defoe wrote a "Journal of the Plague in London," which is graphic in style, but highly imaginative.—Kansas City Star.

Tuberculosis

Consumption is an old-fashioned word which was used for the late stage of tuberculosis when the patient was wasting away or being consumed, and was confined to this disease of the lungs. Tuberculosis nowadays does not mean what consumption used to mean, because the doctors usually make the diagnosis much earlier, when the hope of early cure is very much brighter. All consumption is tuberculosis, but all tuberculosis is not consumption.

DAIRY FACTS

GIVE DAIRY HEIFER BEST OF ATTENTION

Well-bred dairy heifers that have been well fed while carrying their first calf should freshen in good condition, but some may have calked udders. The whole udder may be calked, or one quarter or one side. Still others may have a round, hard place on the bottom or in the rear. Where large seven-day records are desired it is sometimes the practice to make no attempt to remove this swelling, trusting it will milk down and increase the per cent of fat. Where high protein feed is started too soon after calving with this kind of an udder, these hard places never disappear.

If one side is large or the swelling is low down in the rear, a tilted udder is the result. If it is bulging on the bottom, a broken-down udder is bound to follow, going a little lower with each succeeding calving.

In some cases it may go so low that it is not possible to milk the cow from one side. The result is no one wants such an animal to milk or for a breeder.

After studying the conditions that cause udders to lose their natural shape and get more deformed with each calving, we are interested to know how to check these conditions before the udder is ruined.

When a heifer's udder is badly swollen before calving, feed only light, laxative feeds for a few days before and after freshening, such as bran, ground oats, oil meal, beet pulp, or fresh beets with good legume hay and silage.

Having provided the right feeds, reduce the swelling in the udder as soon after freshening as possible.

Next in importance is to get all the milk at all times. Good milkers always massage each quarter with one hand and milk with the other by bringing down the last drop of milk. This is a quicker and more thorough way than thumb and finger stripping. Get the inflammation out soon after calving and always get all the milk if you want good udders that will stand crowding for any kind of records.

If you expect a heifer to do her best as a full-age cow, feed her liberally during this first lactation and as soon as her udder seems normal. If possible, milk her three times a day for at least a part of her lactation.—F. H. Peabody, Cornell College of Agriculture.

Excellent Plan to Heat Water for Dairy Cows

It is cheaper to heat water for dairy cows with a good tank heater than to compel them to change ice water to body heat by consuming extra grain, according to Dean Larsen of South Dakota State college. He asserts that when the cow is required to change about 80 pounds of water daily from freezing temperature to that of the body, or 102 degrees Fahrenheit, much of the feed she has eaten for milk production is necessarily diverted to keeping up bodily heat.

"Grain is too expensive to use as a fuel for heating water," declares Professor Larsen, "and the body of the cow is altogether too useful for other purposes than that of being used as a stove. Furthermore, when a cow is compelled to drink ice cold water she is usually obliged to stand in frosty air; thus she is not only heating the water she drinks but she is also trying to heat the universe. This is impossible from a standpoint of getting economic returns from the cow."

"Get a tank heater. A good serviceable heater may be purchased for a reasonable sum and a considerable amount of waste material may be burned in it, such as waste boards, cobs, etc."

Dairy Facts

A dairy barn doesn't need to be coated to be clean.

May is usually the best time to sell fat cows. Silage balanced with cottonseed cake is a cheap ration.

If a cow gives less than 200 pounds of butter a year she is hardly a great profit producer. Unfortunately there are those that do.

Do not milk cows completely dry for 48 hours after calving. This method lessens danger of milk fever. Feed sparingly the first few days.

Seasons during which the cows do not secure the normal amount of minerals are usually followed by a large number of retained afterbirths among the cows fed on the feeds produced during such season.

A good hog house should be fairly warm in winter; should have a dry floor which is sanitary, comfortable and easily kept clean; should be well ventilated to keep the walls dry and carry out the moist air; should be properly lighted to allow a good supply of direct sunlight; and should be free from drafts.

Always figure on having hogs ready for the highest market of the year, then sell when ready. After a hog is finished, gains in weight are slow and costly.

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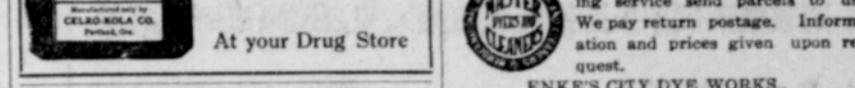
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Use Radiator Shields.

The bureau of mines says that the walls and ceilings above radiators become dark because the air heated by the radiators rises, carrying the dust and dirt in a room with it. This circulation of air cannot be prevented, but radiator shields will prevent the walls and ceiling from becoming dark.

Wood in Our Games.

In more than thirty varieties, about 25,000,000 feet of wood go every year to provide us with skis and billiard cues, snowshoes and tennis racquets, candle pins, bows and arrows and many other things. Wood, says Nature Magazine, does its bit to keep us healthy, amused and lovers of sport and the out of doors.

In an Age Benighted.

Jam and jellies were not known until the eighteenth century, when virtues unknown today were ascribed to them. Jelly being recommended for a sore throat and jam advised for a cough.

World's Largest Picture.

The largest picture ever painted is the "Paradise" of Tintoretto, which hangs in the palace of the doges at Venice. It measures 84 feet by 35 feet.

Use Mirror to Teach.

By the aid of a polished brass mirror which catches the sun's rays and generates steam to run toys, pupils of schools in Germany are taught the principles of heat, energy and engines.

Dogs in Glass Cages.

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Ridiculed King's Memory.

The hatred some Englishmen bore Charles I, beheaded in 1649, is shown by the formation about 1693, of the Calves' Head club, in ridicule of Charles. An ax and a dish of calves' heads were used as symbols.

First American Gold.

The paneled roof of the church of St. Mary Major, in Rome, is gilded with the first gold brought to Spain from South America and presented to the pope by Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain.

Waterfalls in Harness.

Waterfalls more than 800 feet high in India are being harnessed by engineers near Bombay to furnish hydro-electric power.

Strength in Calmness.

Be calm in arguing; for fierceness makes error a fault, and truth discourtesy.—Herbert.

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He thus early moved to Buffalo, N. Y., and established the World's Dispensary, where he put up Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery for the blood as well as the Favorite Prescription for women, carefully preparing them from roots, barks and herbs and placed them with druggists everywhere.

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Errors on the Safe Side.

As there are some faults that have been termed faults on the right side, so there are some errors that might be denominated errors on the safe side. Thus we seldom regret having been too mild, too cautious or too humble; but we often repent having been too violent, too precipitate or too proud.—Colton.

Panama Hat Not Bleached.

A good Panama hat is never bleached after being woven. Those of superior grade are the original color of the little strips of leaves from a dwarf palm-tree plant that grows in those countries of Central and South America where the natives weave the best hats.

Must Watch His Step.

It takes a shrewd political orator to avoid saying something that would give the other side a good argument.—Boston Transcript.

Impatient.

Tramp—"Your honor, would you mind hurrying up my case a little? It's nearly twelve o'clock and if I'm going to go to jail I'd like to get there in time for dinner."

Indian Deserves Honor.

To some nameless Indian the world owes the discovery of that great remedy, quinine, used in the treatment of malaria and many other disorders of the human body.

Bamboo Seeds and Honey.

A delicacy much prized by the Hindu consists of bamboo seeds, roasted and afterward mixed with honey.—Springfield Republican.

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