

Saving Jim Peters

By Mary Donaldson. Copyright, 1905, by R. B. McClure.

In every village in the land there is a ne'er-do-well who is pitied and condemned in the same breath. In the village of Glenville Jim Peters was the man. He was constitutionally lazy, was a toper from head to heel, and his wife and two children often wanted for clothes and food. Mr. Peters had been struggling with on numerous occasions. Women had given him tongue lashings, and men had hinted at tar and feathers. He had been induced to sign the temperance pledge on twenty different occasions, only to break it each time anybody offered him a drink, and he had been provided with work many times over, only to show his general laziness.

One day when the Woman's Mission society was holding its monthly meeting Aunt Hannah Davis brought up Jim Peters' case and declared that something should be done. She was given license to go ahead, and she proceeded to go over the old beaten track. Jim signed the pledge, agreed to stop chewing plug, tobacco and go to work, and he even expressed an anxiety to "get religion" and become in time a deacon of the church. His good resolutions carried him along for two weeks, and then he fell down, and he fell hard; not only that, but he boasted around that Aunt Hannah was an easy person to deal with.

The good woman lived about a mile out of the village, having a farm of her own and enjoying the life of a spinster, and one morning she got up, to be told by the hired man that somebody had robbed the smokehouse overnight. Jim Peters was the only person for ten miles around who could be suspected, and when the hired man told his news he added that Jim ought to be arrested and his house searched for the plunder.

"We must not accuse any one without evidence," replied Aunt Hannah. "It may be been Jim Peters or it may have been a dog. I'm rather of the opinion that it was a dog, and I would suggest that you get out the old bear trap and set it in front of the smokehouse tonight. If a dog steals meat once he will twice, won't he?"

"That's what I have heard," observed the hired man as he started for the barn to hunt for the old trap.

Aunt Hannah had started in to reform Jim Peters in earnest mood, and she bragged that she would accomplish what others had failed to do. When the man beckoned she was rebuked and criticised on all sides, and although she seemed to take it in good part, she felt something of a spirit of revenge.

The bear trap was oiled and set, but it was a week before any game appeared. It was the hired man again who brought her news. As he came into the kitchen with the milk pails he observed laconically:

"Well, Mrs. Davis, we have caught the dog."

"I see," she replied after a look from the window.

"It's a dog that looks exactly like Jim Peters."

"Yes! I'll go out after breakfast and have a closer look. I wish you would cut me three or four switches from a peach tree before you go to work. If you hear the dog howling, you needn't stop hoeing corn on that account."

The woman lingered over her breakfast as long as she could, and when she finally donned her sunbonnet and wandered out to the smokehouse she had several switches, a pail of water and a dipper in her hands.

"Good morning, Mr. Peters," she saluted when she had come to a halt.

"I was looking for my jackknife here last night, and I walked into this old trap," he said by way of explanation.

"Yes, I see. Is Mrs. Peters well?"

"About the same as usual."

"And the children?"

"Hang it, why don't you call Joe up and tell him to get me out of this? This infernal trap has about cut my leg off. If 'twas anybody but you I'd have the law on 'em. Who knows how long I'll be laid up with this leg?"

"Mr. Peters," said Aunt Hannah in very sober tones, "do you remember your promises to me?"

"How am I going to keep promises when all the town is agin' me? You are agin' me, too, or you wouldn't have set this trap for me."

"You have been coaxed, bribed, pleaded with and fairly bought, but you still loaf around and get drunk. It is time that some other plan was resorted to. Drink this."

She handed him a dipper of water, and he drank about half of it. He was about to pour the rest on the ground when she said:

"I know it has a strange taste to you, but you'll have to get used to it. Don't waste a drop. Here—have some more."

"I've had a plenty."

Aunt Hannah picked up one of the switches and proceeded to lay it over Jim's shoulders in a vigorous manner. As it was summer and he had only a ragged cotton shirt across his back he was speedily reminded of his boyhood days. He reached for the dipper and downed a quart of water, and then said:

"I say, I want this trap taken off. Do you think I'm a man of wood or iron? When I tell folks that Aunt

Hannah Davis is pizen mean 'nuff to set bear traps for innocent persons you'll be hauled up in law."

"I've heard on good authority, Mr. Peters, that you lick your wife."

"If I do she needs it."

"Well, we'll see how a licking goes in your case. We'll try one anyhow as an experiment."

"I'll holler and raise the hull county!"

"Then the whole county will be here to see."

Aunt Hannah picked out the longest switch, dampened her hand to keep her hold good, and then began the "experiment." Only the third blow had fallen when Peters began to yell, but no pause was made until he had received the thrashing of his life. The woman had the will and the muscle, and the sprout from the peach tree was supple and lasting. When about thirty blows had been administered Aunt Hannah paused.

"You see how it works," she said, "and you don't seem to like it. Will you ever whip your wife again?"

"I won't promise till you let me out of this trap."

"Oh, you won't! Then we'll have a little more of it."

Six or eight more stinging cuts were enough for Jim. He promised on his word of honor never to raise his hand against his wife again. He was then handed a third dipper of water, and when he refused it the switch came down over his back, and the woman said:

"You've got to learn to like the taste of water, and you've got to learn here and now. Your children had to go barefoot all last winter because you had to have your whisky. Drink it down or you'll get another dusting."

Jim managed to drink the water, and was then asked for his promise not to touch intoxicating drinks for one year.

"But what am I goin' to do when a feller offers to treat?" he protested.

"You are going to remember this," she replied as she gave him half a dozen cuts and brought a fresh chorus of howls.

He promised. Aunt Hannah went into the house and wrote out a pledge. It was a pledge embodying four or five promises, and after he had taken another drink from the dipper Jim put his name to it. The hired man was then called up to sign as a witness and to pry open the jaws of the trap, and Jim went limping away.

That day marked an epoch in Jim Peters' life. Within a week he had work. He turned to water like a duck. He administered no more thrashings to his wife. In fact, before a year was up he was spoken of as a sober, steady man, and had credit at the stores for the first time in his life. Plenty of people asked Aunt Hannah how she did it, and her answer was alike to all:

"Why, I first got my bear trap and then tried an experiment."

Tracing Back a Common Saying.

It is a curious bit of literary exercise to take a common saying and trace it back to its origin. Take the common saying, for instance, "All that glitters is not gold." It is found in current literature everywhere and in a dozen different forms. Dryden renders it, "All, as they say, that glitters is not gold." Spenser says, "Gold all is not that doth golden seem." Lydgate has the same idea in the words, "All is not gold that outward sheweth bright." Chaucer expresses it in somewhat different phraseology. Middleton has it, "All is not gold that glisteneth," and Shakespeare says, "All that glistens is not gold." Go a little farther back, however, and the same expression is found in the monkish collection of proverbs, and there is no doubt if a classical scholar were to set to work with the determination to hunt the proverb down, no matter how long it took, he would find it in Latin, Greek and most other ancient and dead languages. It is a natural outgrowth of sarcasm as applied to fictitious show and is no doubt as old as the science of metal working.

Entrapping Marine Monsters.

On the northern coast of Norway the fishermen get a yearly harvest from the whales which stray into the harbors. At certain localities, where the bays are almost landlocked, lofty stands are erected, similar to the other outlooks on the north Pacific, and when a school is sighted scores of boats put out and, by the simple process of driving, hundreds of the oil producing cetaceans are entrapped. The Faroe islands are famous for this method of whaling. One of the largest catches ever made was in Hvarford, Iceland, where eleven hundred were driven ashore. The blackfish, or whale, come down the Atlantic coasts from the north, encounter shallow water, then follow it along and are naturally led into the cul-de-sac awaiting them. Here the boats easily surround and drive the whales in.

Didn't Catch Them.

The following story of Oliver Wendell Holmes was told some years ago by a physician who was a student in the Harvard Medical school when Dr. Holmes was an instructor in anatomy there.

One day the subject before the class was the cranium, and a human skull was passed from hand to hand, the instructor asking the members of the

class to describe the prominences, cavities and apertures. Student after student gave the names and locations of the orifices, until finally the inquiry narrowed down to one opening which baffled every one.

Dr. Holmes waited patiently for some one to distinguish himself, but no explanation was advanced. When all had given it up, the doctor rather dryly remarked: "That is Holmes' hole. I made it myself."

BEGGARS' OUTFITTER.

Creates Appliances to Order and Manufactures Cripples.

In a small but neat and comfortable red brick house at Hackney lives an elderly, careworn man who is known to his neighbors by the mysterious title of "the beggars' tailor." The "beggars' outfitter" would be a more appropriate sobriquet, for the elderly man's trade has nothing to do with the making of clothes. He equips and fits out professional mendicants for the practice of their trade.

"A mendicant who has not mastered the tricks of the trade," began the beggars' tailor, "has no more chance of making money than has a pugilist who has not learned to box. He must get an outfit. For a woman a small child is the most essential detail. But six beggar women out of eight have no children of their own of the right age. I supply them."

"But that's only a small part of my business, I'll guarantee to make the healthiest looking man in England resemble an anemic cripple in ten minutes. Only a man who can work that transformation has a right to call himself a beggars' tailor."

"The public likes horrors. Do you see those?" The beggars' tailor took from his breast pocket a large pill box and removed the lid. Inside were about a score of wafers of different sizes, shiny with some adhesive on one side, and red, protuberant and nasty looking on the other.

"Those," he continued, "are beggars' sores. It doesn't sound nice, but you don't want niceness in this business. My clients purchase them from me, stick them in the exact spot on their necks or faces and find them a good investment. When the wafer is stuck on, the skin around it must be carefully treated with red and white coloring matter."

"Sturdy beggars up from the country always pose on the verge of starvation. If it weren't for me their fat faces would baffle them. But, as every stage dresser knows, a few artificial lines and a judicious use of shadows will make a face like Falstaff's emaciated and lean. Beggars seldom wash, and that's lucky for themselves. Otherwise they'd be put to fresh expense every day."

"Are there other tricks of the trade? I should think so. If you ever see a one legged beggar wearing a long coat, ten to one he's a 'crook.' With a little practice a sound limbed man can bend up his leg till it's almost parallel with his thigh bone. He comes to me for an artificial leg, which he fixes to his kneecap. The long coat enables him to carry off the fraud. A medal on his chest, a white about Tel-el-Kebir or Colenso, and the trick's done. For money making no pose can beat the 'soldier broke in our wars.'"

"Half the blind and one legged beggars can see as well as you or I. I can fit a blind man with everything from a dog and eye shade to Braille book in raised up characters. Dogs, of course, cost money, as they have to be specially trained. As a rule, the swindling 'blind man' hasn't got a dog. It's not necessary and a great expense, whereas a real blind man, if he hasn't got a child, must have one."

"Many sham cripples and 'blind' men are ex-criminals. A man who's been 'lugged' and done a long term of penal and doesn't like it fights shy of committing a second crime. But he says he can't get work as long as he's on ticket. As a rule, he makes a very successful beggar, for nothing sharpens a man's wits like jail."—London Letter in Los Angeles Times.

Cervantes and His Bride.

A biographer of Cervantes, the author of "Don Quixote," says: "With high ideals in his mind and but few pieces in his wallet, he married, on Dec. 12, 1584, with Donna Catalina de Palacios Calazar y Vozmediano. The tenth of his fortune, which Cervantes settled upon his wife, amounted to 100 ducats, while an inventory of the bride's effects include several plantations of young vines in the district of Esquivias, a small town of New Castle; six bushels of meal and one of wheat, some articles of household furniture, two linen and three cotton sheets, a cushion and two pillows stuffed with wool; one good blanket and one worn, table, chairs, pots and pans, a brasier, a grater, several jars, sacred images in alabaster and silver gilt, a crucifix, two little images of the baby Jesus, four beehives, forty-five hens."

Feeding the Canary.

Remember never to give canaries too much heating food. Their regular diet should be canary seed mixed with one-fourth the quantity of summer rape seed; this with a supply of chickweed, groundsell or water cress is sufficient, except in the breeding season, when a more stimulating food is needed, such as hemp seed and a little chopped egg. In training a young canary to sing the best method is to place his cage near that of a good songster. If this cannot be done, procure a sagolet, which will imitate bird notes and play a simple air on it over and over again. The bird will learn the tune in from two to six months. As soon as a baby canary can feed itself it should be removed to a separate cage or it will learn its parent's notes instead of the song it is learning from its teacher.

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