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## APPEARANCES

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## The Rise of William Bentley

(Original)  
William Bentley, having an enormous appetite, was driven to exercise or death. He reluctantly chose exercise.

No one ever thought of calling him Mr. Bentley or even William. He was universally known as Billy Bentley. When Billy announced his intention to take exercise every one laughed. A great many kinds of exercise were offered to him, most of them for the purpose of gaging him. One day the dame said to him:

"Billy, if you wish to take exercise and don't care to benefit yourself by it except in health, why not do something to benefit others?"

"How?" asked Billy.  
"At the bureau of united charities we need men to saw wood. Wood sawing is the best remedy a dyspeptic can take. Go up there every day and give your services to the poor, and perhaps the Lord will return them to you multiplied."

Billy took the hint. Arrayed in a frock coat, a white waistcoat and a silk hat, he went to the bureau and sawed wood from 3 till 5. Then he went home, took a bath and ate a dinner that required another two hours' work to digest. He felt so much better that he kept up the wood sawing with great regularity.

One day soon after Billy commenced to saw there was a meeting of the lady directors of the bureau in the building overlooking the woodyard. Billy was engaged in digesting his yesterday's dinner.

"Who's that out in the yard sawing wood?" asked Miss Arabella Stevens, a wealthy young lady much interested in charitable work. "He doesn't look like a pauper."

The manager was called in and questioned. She reported that the gentleman's name was Bentley and that he sawed wood, she supposed, from an interest in the poor.

Now, the ladies present had husbands or brothers or sons, but none of them had ever seen or heard of a man who loved the poor so well as to saw wood for them. It was hard enough to get the men to give money, and when a man hadn't that to give he gave nothing.

"Isn't it perfectly lovely?" said Miss Stevens.

"Such true charity!" remarked the president.

"Reminds me of the sacrifice of the widow who gave her mite!" observed the secretary.

"I wonder who he is anyway?" asked a director.

"He's aristocratic looking even while doing a work so far beneath a gentleman," put in another director.

"He ennobles the work," added a third.

When after a month had rolled round and the board met again at the same place and hour, there was Billy bending over a saw buck getting himself in shape to gorge himself again at dinner. The board was thrown into a flutter of admiration compared with which the original discovery of the friend of the poor was as nothing. How could this charitable wonder be utilized in the world of philanthropy? It was like finding a diamond in the mud. Billy was sent for to appear before the board and, without being given an opportunity to give a true account of himself, was obliged to listen to adulation that astonished him. Then he blushed and said that sawing wood was excellent exercise.

"Did you ever see such modesty?" whispered the secretary to the treasurer.

"The only genuine exposition of 'Let not your right hand know what your left hand doeth' I have ever met with," replied the treasurer.

Then the president asked Billy if he would accept the position of superintendent of all the charities under the direction of the bureau. Billy was too astounded to reply. Then the president told him that his charitable nature was only equaled by his modesty and he should have a week to consider the matter.

Before the end of the week Billy received an invitation to dine with Miss Stevens and ate so enormous a dinner that the lady remarked:

"Poor man! He works so hard for others it's no wonder he needs to eat heartily."

Every man needs opportunity, and Billy Bentley had found his. Whether he would have grasped it had it not been for the interest Miss Stevens took in him is another matter. Certain it is that Billy, seeing a possibility of possessing her and her fortune, concentrated his faculties on his work. Naturally he turned to labor saving. Now, some managers will work very hard and accomplish very little. Others will work very little and accomplish a great deal.

Billy was one of the latter kind. Though he sat at his desk sharpening his pencil, he managed the United Charities remarkably well. But this was merely a starter. Mr. Bentley developed an administrative talent that was truly surprising. One of his old acquaintances called it "a genius for finding ways of doing nothing where there was much to be done without inconvenience or other evil result." Bentley was offered one position after another, each a step higher than the last, until he became president of a mammoth trust.

Of course Mr. Bentley married Miss Stevens, and this was one of the secondary causes of his remarkable rise in the world. But, on the other hand, his fortune is now so great that beside his wife's is insignificant.

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