

THE POLK COUNTY ITEMIZER.

DALLAS, SATURDAY, MARCH 17, 1883.

THE WRONG COAT.

"Fire! Fire!" Jack Parry rubbed his eyes, as he sprang out of his cot-bed in the loft, and instinctively hurried on his trousers.

He looked at the clock, and saw that it was only half past five. He looked again at the clock, and saw that it was only half past five. He looked again at the clock, and saw that it was only half past five.

It would not do to run the risk, Jack, at a word, went out to harness the horse, and put them to the big wagon, while his father helped his mother to gather a few wraps and valises together, and dress the frightened, screaming baby.

When the Parrys moved to Michigan, Grandpa Dibble, who always chided to everything, said to his son-in-law: "But how'll ye educate the children, John?"

"I don't know, Father," said John Parry. "Sary'll teach them to read an' write, prob'ly, and I'll see 'em to school, but I can't be honest. I take it that these two things will have to underlay any education that's good for shucks; we must risk the rest."

Obedience and honesty Jack had indeed been thoroughly taught. He had never been in the house since he was a boy, but at his father's order he went to work manfully, and was already when the others came to the door.

"Oh, Jack, no coat on!" said the dejected, trembling little mother. "Can't stop for it now," said John Parry. "It's five o'clock, Sary? There goes a big white-wood smash across the creek! Run the critters, Jack—the fire's after us!"

In another they were beyond the house, but not an instant too soon, for a burning branch swept through the air and lit on the roof, which blazed like never beneath it. Jack looked the terrified horses into a run, while his father, on the back seat, held the sick baby in arm, and put the other about his wife to steady her.

The air grew heavier and hotter; the roads were rough, the water springs hard. Blinded by smoke and frightened at the nearing roar of stern and flame, the horses leaped on beyond the power of any guiding hand. There was a sudden lurch, the wheels tilted on a log by the roadside, and the coach pitched out behind, with all its occupants, each clinging to the reins instinctively, but he could no more stop the whirl than he could arrest the whirlwind and fire behind him. Father, mother, sister, all were tossed into the track of the fire-like dry leaves, and never again did he see one of them. Their fate was certain; he could only hope it had been sudden and sure death.

A MODERN SAMSON.

In the Troy Times recently appeared an article giving a short history of the life and doings of Abner Melrath, of Euclid, Ohio, and in that article he was represented as the strongest man in America, while living with the exception of that famous strong man of Northern New York, Joseph Call.

Still he felt that his father and mother would have thought it was dishonest to keep it, and with the courage of a recluse boy, he felt sure he could find work in Dayton. But he did not. There were plenty of boys and men, too, already looking for work, and nobody knew him, nor had he any recommendations.

For several nights he kept to himself, and he had a light to him, empty freight-car near the railway station, doing a little porter's work to pay for this shelter; then he did some things about the tavern stable, for his board, sleeping in the shed, or on the hay-mow; and once in a while he caught himself wishing he were a few dollars to be kept in a Connecticut, where he had distant relatives. But the quick thought "What would Mother say?" repressed the wish at once.

At last he found steady work on a farm out of town, with small wages. But he had a bid and a kept to himself, and his chief work was to drive a team into Dayton and back to feed, or to fetch lumber, coal, and fuel, for his employer and the neighbors.

One day, about a month after he went to this place, as he was driving a load of coal past the express office, walking his horses, for the load was heavy and the mud deep, the clerk saw him, and, running to the door, called out: "Say, young fellow! D'you know anybody of the name of Jack Parry?"

"I guess so," said Jack, with a smile; "that's my name. What's to pay?" "Nothin'—it's prepaid. I had a faint recollection that a fellow about your size left a package here a while ago directed to James Agard. I wasn't sure sure't was you, for you never signed out so fancy as you was. What have you done with that red jacket, sonny? How'd it haw?"

Jack colored; he had on an old overcoat of the farmer's, but the red jacket was under it, for he had no other coat. "Well, any how, here's a bundle for you, since nobody else has called for it; it's got a kind of a label on the tag, same as letters have: 'Return to James Agard & Co., Deerford, Conn., if not called for in one month.' And the month's 'most up' too,—it's a high thing for you."

Jack did not know what to think or say. He signed a receipt for the bundle, put it up on the coal, and hastily went on his way. He did not get home till after dark, and when supper was over and all his work done he could only go to bed and wait for morning, as he never was allowed a light in his left, and he did not want to open the package till he was alone. But with the first dawning light he sprang up eagerly and untied the string. There lay a gray coat, and with it the rest of the suit, a set of warm, underclothing, and, on top of all, a letter running thus:

"Dear Jack Parry: I am glad there is such a honest boy in Dayton. I wish that I were here, but we want you for another, anyway. You are out of work, and I think perhaps you are for I know how it is out of work, you will find money in the best pocket of your coat to buy a ticket for this place. James Agard & Co. want a boy in their store, and want a honest one. Come straight, and bring this letter to identify yourself. "Oh, if mother only knew it!" was the quick thought that glistened in Jack's happy eyes, and choked him for a moment, as he laid down the letter. Perhaps she did. He is in Agard & Co.'s great wholesale store on the Deerford James Agard, Jr.'s recommendation. And it all came of sending the wrong coat!

A RIGHT HOUSE-KEEPER'S LIFE.

The keepers of the light-houses lead a rule very monotonous lives. Their duties are to see that the lights are carefully trimmed and clean every day, and to repeat this operation as many times during the day as the case may require.

In stormy weather the lights must be trimmed more frequently than in fine weather. Some of the smaller lights have but one keeper each. He is expected to sit up till 11 o'clock at night, in which case, if the weather is good and the light is working properly, he is allowed to lie down for three or four hours rest. After examining the light at about 3 o'clock in the morning, he must wait till the morning, but to go directly back to Dayton, where he had received his clothes, and where the nearest express office was stationed. He could not return the coat to the agent, for he had distributed all the clothes destined for that point, Jack being one of the last applicants, and had gone farther with the rest; so he rolled it in a newspaper and slipped down stairs with his shoes in his hands, putting on over his vest the old red sack he had worn before, and set out for Dayton.

He had to beg his breakfast when he reached the town; then he bought a sheet of brown paper, a postal card with the three-cent piece, and, sitting down on the sunny side of a lumber pile, made the coat into a neat bundle, firmly tied.

He asked the use of pen and ink at the express office, directed his package and wrote his postal as follows, for he could write well, though a little uncertain as to his spelling: "DEAR SIR: I send you by express a coat which got in the clean wash to burst out folds here, I don't believe it ought to have so, as it is the same as the letter, all things which except 2 cents used for paper, string and card."

Jack felt a great weight off his mind when the bundle was fairly out of his hands. It was hard to send a letter help he needed so much—harder for a homeless, penniless boy, united in one mind, form the poorest, the sweetest, the richest, the brightest, and the most steadfast happiness.

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