

The Wrong Number

By R. RAY BAKER

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It seemed that the girl at the central office never would make the connection. Hal Golden fumed, for he was always in a hurry, especially when talking over the telephone. Of all the irksome activities of his business life, holding a wire conversation was the worst. This in spite of the fact that the telephone was his daily bread.

Finally he heard a click and knew someone was answering. A woman's voice said, "Hello," and without preliminaries Hal launched into the business on hand.

"I'd like to speak to Frank," he said. "Frank?" the woman's voice repeated. It was a singularly sweet voice. The owner must be quite captivating. If she was anything like the intonation of her speech. But Hal had no time for women, no matter how captivating. His only experience in love had taught him a lesson.

"Yes—Frank," he said brusquely, but not quite so brusquely as he usually spoke. "Isn't this Frank Jarvis' residence?"

"No," replied the young woman; "you have the wrong number, I guess."

"Beg pardon," he said, and hung up the receiver. This was getting to be the limit. For the third time this week, while calling from his home, he had been connected with the wrong number. What was getting wrong with the service? He would have to look into matters himself. If other subscribers were having the same difficulties his regime as manager of the Sparta office was not receiving desirable advertising. Tomorrow he would talk to the chief operator—yes, he would call in the very girl who had been making these mistakes, and if necessary he'd dismiss her from her position. On second thought, he'd give her one more chance.

He called again and this time had no trouble in getting Frank Jarvis on the line, and the business was duly discussed. Then, being in a reminiscent mood, induced largely by the pleasant voice of the wrong number, he settled back in the big chair and smoked, and let his thoughts roam to bygone days, a luxury in which he seldom indulged—because it was dangerous.

It was not such a long time ago, at that, when his young heart had burned with affection for Mildred Faunce. They had really been engaged when the earthquake occurred. The cataclysm was a sudden termination of the engagement by Mildred. He had never thought of her as an unreasonable girl, but she appeared that way now, for there was no other reason in evidence for the break in relations but the fact that Hal had taken Inez Walton to a theater and a dance while Mildred was out of town on a visit.

Hal had thought it would be all right to spend a couple of his lonely evenings with Inez, because she was a fellow worker, being employed in the telephone office where he had a job as "trouble shooter." She was an attractive girl, but not the equal of Mildred. Mildred had told him to amuse himself with other young ladies, if he chose, while she was gone, because, she assured him: "I intend to have a good time myself." That had been in accord with her broad-minded ideas.

But the first time Hal called after Mildred's return she told him all was over and handed his ring back to him, and before he came to himself he was walking down the street in a most unpleasant daze.

"I can't come between you and someone else," was all she had offered by way of explanation. She had seemed more sad than angry, but she always had remarkable control of her temper. He tried twice to heal the breach, but received no encouragement, and finally was forced to the conclusion that Mildred, while having a "good time" on her visit, had met someone she considered more desirable. Unable to live in the same town with Mildred after the change in the situation, he obtained a transfer to Sparta, where he worked so earnestly, in order to keep his mind off his lost love, that he climbed rapidly to the managership. Now he called himself a "woman hater."

All this passed in review in Hal's mind as he sat in his bachelor apartments that night, but finally he cast thoughts of Mildred aside, shrugged his shoulders, smiled bitterly, knocked the ashes from his pipe, and retired. The next evening his experience with the wrong number was repeated. Furious, he called central and said abruptly:

"This is Mr. Golden, the telephone manager. Four times this week you have given me the wrong number, and it will be necessary for you to explain in my office at ten o'clock tomorrow morning."

At ten in the morning Hal was busy with some reports when there came a gentle knock—not thud, just gentle—on the door. Without looking, he called, "Come in."

"You wished me to call at this hour, Mr. Golden," he heard a girl's voice remind him.

"Yes," he said shortly, without looking up from the papers. "Have a chair and I'll attend to your case in a moment."

After he had coughed significantly twice, he turned in his chair. He fixed his gaze on the girl and could not remove it. He was trembling with some

strong emotion, and he knew what it was, although he tried to gainsay it. For the girl he had summoned for a rebuke was no stranger.

She sat there demurely in a straight-backed chair, fingering a plait in her dress, and asked:

"What was it you wished to see me about?"

Her voice broke the charm. He rose and insisted that she take his easy chair, but she declined. He cleared his throat and said, haltingly:

"There are some things I don't understand—why you are here, why you persistently gave me the wrong number when I called from my home, why—well, the mysteries extend back three years to a night when you returned a ring. Hang it, Mildred! That never seemed just right to me."

She smiled and sighed, ran her fingers along the plait and began speaking slowly.

"In a little town people are queer. If they see a boy and girl walk along the street together, folks immediately scent a desperate love affair. The story circulates and grows like any other."

"When I returned home from my visit that time I was told by several different persons that you and Inez Walton were furiously in love and that I was standing between you. I at once decided to step aside and let Inez have a clear path. I tried to make it easy for you by doing it suddenly and not asking embarrassing questions. It was not easy, either, because—well, I—I cared a lot. But it seemed my duty."

"When you went away, instead of becoming engaged to Inez, I set me thinking, and I began to wonder whether I had been too hasty. I believe I should have written to you, but I had no idea where to find you. A month ago father died and I was placed on my own resources, because his business affairs were badly involved. I wanted to get away from depressing surroundings, so I came to Sparta and took the first job I could find, which was this switchboard job. I had had some experience at home, you will remember. The same day I learned you were my—my boss. I met Inez Walton on the street, and she gave me her telephone number. I had always been puzzled about you and her, and I saw my chance to find out if you really cared for her. That is why I connected you with her number every night, and I listened in—shamefully. It appears now that I was wrong. Three years ago, when I made you take the ring without any explanation, I should have asked if you loved Inez. It was not—"

He was standing beside her now, and he interrupted with:

"It is never too late, and I'll answer now. I never gave a thought to Inez, except as a friend, and she cared nothing for me, I am sure. Why, I never recognized her voice on the wire; didn't know she was living here, in fact."

He fumbled in a pocket and brought forth a ring.

"This is the same one. Won't you wear it again? Really, the folks who told you I was in love with Inez—they—well, they—"

A smile broke over her face as she extended a hand.

"They had the wrong number, you mean, don't you?" she asked.

SPOILED BY SUDDEN SUCCESS

Fame and Riches Brought Nothing but Sorrow to Bret Harte, According to Mark Twain.

Mark Twain relates in his autobiography in Harper's Magazine, that when Bret Harte started east from the Pacific coast after he had won fame in a day with "The Heathen Chinee," and with the eyes of the world upon him, that he had lived all of his life that was worth living. He was entering upon a career of poverty, debt, bitterness, and a world-wide fame that must have been often odious to him.

There was a happy Bret Harte, a contented Bret Harte, an ambitious Bret Harte, a hopeful Bret Harte, a bright, cheerful, easy-laughing Bret Harte, a Bret Harte to whom it was a bubbling and effervescent joy to be alive. That Bret Harte died in San Francisco. It was the corpse of that Bret Harte that swept in splendor across the continent; that refused to go to a banquet in Chicago given in his honor because there had been a breach of etiquette—a carriage had not been sent for it; that resumed its eastward journey, leaving behind the grand scheme of the Lakeside Monthly in sorrowful collapse; that undertook to give all the product of his brain for one year to an Eastern magazine for \$10,000—a stupendous sum of money in those days—but collected and spent the money before the year was out, and then began a dismal and harassing death-in-life which was to cease only at the grave.

Thirty-three Feet of Rain.

Seasons near the equator are not marked by changes in temperature, but by the amount of rainfall. Generally speaking, the year is divided into wet and dry seasons, known respectively as invierno (winter) and verano (summer), though there is much variation as regards the time and duration of these seasons, particularly in mountainous regions. There are also areas where it rarely, if ever, rains, and others still where rain falls practically every day of the year. In the Pacific coast region of Colombia the wet season is continuous, and there is a recorded rainfall at San Jose of 400.88 inches, a little more than thirty-three feet.—National Geographic Magazine.

BEST VARIETIES OF BROOM CORN

Success With Crop Depends Largely on Proper Care During Harvesting Period.

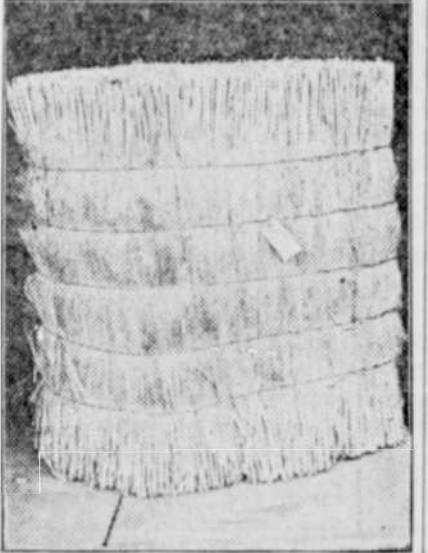
FIRST PICK MATURED HEADS

Proper Time for Harvesting Is When Fiber Is Deep Green From Tip to Knuckle—Avoid Immature and Overripe Brush.

(Prepared by the United States Department of Agriculture.)

Success in handling either of the two varieties of broom corn produced in the United States—Standard and Dwarf—depends to a large extent on proper care during the harvesting period. Even with the most efficient systems of distribution it is impossible to overcome the handicap of an inferior product, says the United States Department of Agriculture in a new publication, Department Bulletin 1019, Marketing Broom Corn, prepared by G. B. Algire, assistant in marketing hay and broom corn.

Selection of Heads.
The selection of properly matured heads is a matter for first attention. Broom corn is in the proper stage for harvest when the fiber is deep green



Broom Corn Must Be Well Baled to Bring Best Price.

from tip to knuckle, a stage that may be reached when the head is in bloom or not until the seed is in the dough stage. Immature fiber lacks elasticity, shrivels perceptibly on curing, and presents an uninviting appearance when baled. Overripe brush is equally undesirable.

Preventable waste among manufacturers can be traced in many instances to the first steps in harvesting. In general, anything unfit for use in the manufacture of brooms should, so far as practicable, be left in the fields. To command the best price, broom corn must be free from seed and well baled.

Methods of Handling.

The bulletin discusses the various methods of handling broom corn on the farm and in the process of distribution, including marketing, practices employed by various classes of dealers, methods of sampling, storage facilities, and co-operative marketing. Copies of it may be had free upon application to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.

GRASS GROWN WITHOUT SEED

Best Strains Have Been Developed by Cutting Up Runners From Thrifty-Looking Spots.

Many good turf grasses that reproduce by runners have lost the habit of producing seed, and for this reason the United States Department of Agriculture has been experimenting with the vegetative propagation of some of the most satisfactory strains of bent grasses. Better strains have been developed by finding spots in lawns and on golf courses where the turf was particularly good, cutting up the runners and planting these cuttings in increase plots. Most of this work has been done in northern states, although some good strains of Bermuda grass have been selected which give promise of value in the South.

A number of commercial growers have been working on these improved grasses and now have cuttings for sale. However, it is possible for a person to improve his own lawn or for a golf club to improve the turf on the course by selecting spots where the grass is particularly good and growing the cut runners in rows in a garden or field. When the good strain has been increased sufficiently in this way the old lawn or turf may be plowed up and the new strain established.

POULTRY LITTER HELPS SOIL

Straw Filled With Droppings Is One of Most Valuable Fertilizers for Gardens.

Poultry litter, particularly straw filled with droppings, is one of the most valuable fertilizers for gardens and small fruits. It is particularly worth while where clay soils are to be worked, because in a few seasons the addition of this litter will completely change the character of the soil and give one a rich, friable and easily worked soil capable of producing almost any garden crop, whether vegetables or flowers.

Something to Think About

By F. A. WALKER

IN SLUMBERLAND

ONLY a relatively small number of the 1,700,000,000 inhabitants of this world are really mentally awake, capable of finding their way through the labyrinth of professional and business avenues to a place of secure independence.

When the long shadows cross their paths and they discover to their dismay that the western sky is darkening, they rub their sleepy eyes and ruefully regret the years they have mispent in groping from pillar to post without worthy accomplishment.

They were in slumberland when the church bells rang of a Sunday morning; they were in slumberland when in the brilliantly illuminated ballrooms they danced to luring music with fair partners till the east was rosy, and another day came gleaming over the gorgeous hilltops and smiled benignly on pale faces and broken promises.

They wasted drifting days which drifted into wasted years.

Again and again they rubbed their melancholy eyes and saw in their last supine effort to reclaim themselves that they were on the hazy borderland of old age, with forty or fifty years behind them.

Some there were, even at that late hour in life who managed to turn about, pull themselves together and snatch themselves from precarious positions, but the numbers were small, for their strokes were light and their old habits were strong and hard to break.

They lacked the staying power and the flexibility of youth.

So has gagged the world and so it will ever wag until the crack of doom.

If you wish to pick success, plant your orchard while in the full vigor of life so that you may gather the fruit and enjoy it while your senses of appreciation are still keen and your faculties yet alert.

Make friends, but do your own digging, your own pruning and your own watering. If your friends scoff at your industry, dig all the harder, think harder and keep at your work in heat and cold.

Seek the counsel of those who came here before you, your father and mother, for they know where your feet are likely to slip and your judgment is liable to err.

Do these things without turning either to the right or the left and nothing save death can stop you in the ultimate realization of your fondest dreams, and the fine achievements of which you are capable.

Mother's Cook Book

As the rosy beams of morning herald childhood's happy days, And the shielding clouds of noontide guard its youth from toly's ways; So the grander clouds of evening, with their lights and shades sublime, Speak a broader, deeper knowledge, and a manhood's nobler prime; Then the twilight of life's seasons calmly come and calmly go; Happy they for whom its storm clouds can a silver lining show.

SEASONABLE GOOD THINGS

THIS is the time to prepare relishes, preserves, jellies and conserves.

White Relish.

Chop four quarts of cabbage, a quart of celery, one quart of white stringless beans cut in bits, one quart of silver-skinned onions chopped. Sprinkle all the vegetables with salt, except the onions, using a cupful of cold water to cover. Let stand overnight. In the morning drain, add the onions and put over the fire; add one cupful of fresh-grated horseradish, one ounce each of mustard seed and celery seed, three cupfuls of sugar and a piece of white ginger root. Cover with good vinegar and cook until the vegetables are tender, then put into jars.

Green Relish.

Take two quarts each of green tomatoes and cabbage chopped, one quart of green cucumbers, one quart of green peppers and a few white radishes, all chopped. Place the vegetables in a stone jar and pour over them enough cold water to cover; add a cupful of salt. Let stand overnight and drain off the water. Put three quarts of vinegar in a kettle, add three cupfuls of sugar, three small bags of spice containing one ounce each of allspice, pepper, cloves, mace, celery and mustard seed. Cover with vinegar and cook until the vegetables are tender. Add more salt if needed and can in jars.

Pickled Mushrooms.

Gather the small-sized button mushrooms, peel and cook, adding one cupful of vinegar to a quart of mushrooms, salt and spices to taste. Simmer until the mushrooms are tender, then can boiling hot.

Sweet Cider.

Any surplus apples may be put through the meat grinder, the juice squeezed out through a bag, then if bottled and bottled hot will never ferment. This is especially good for mince-meat, adding a little to the pies when they are being made.

Neelie Maxwell
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The SANDMAN STORY

YOUNGSTER'S LESSON

YOUNGSTER wasn't a little puppy. He was past that age, but still he was a young dog and had many things to learn. Mrs. Old Dog, his mother, tried her best to teach Youngster the things that a useful dog should know, but Youngster thought he knew enough.

If his mother told him not to run after the master when he started off with a gun he did not pay any attention, and often got a whipping from the master for not going back when he told him to.

Then, too, Youngster would jump up on folks when they came to the farm, and Mrs. Old Dog told him many times never to make friends with strangers, and besides with your own friends it was very bad manners indeed to jump and put muddy paws on people's clothes.

One day his mother told him that he must be very careful not to go back



He Saw a Strange Dog.

of the barn, for the master had placed a trap there for Mr. Fox to step on when he came to visit the barnyard.

But Youngster let this advice go in one ear and out the other, as he did much of the other warnings that his mother gave. He began to play and forgot all about it.

Youngster had heard a great deal about Mr. Fox, but no one had said how he looked. He thought of course he would know this bad fellow when he met him, and of course Youngster intended to catch him and show his mother and the master how smart he

was in spite of all they said about him—that he was a silly puppy and did not seem to learn a thing.

It was late in the afternoon one day when his mother was sound asleep and some of the hens were sitting under bushes in the shade that Youngster began running around the barn chasing a rat.

When he got behind the barn he forgot all about the rat, for there, looking at him from behind a barrel, he saw a strange dog. Youngster barked.

"Hush! I know where there is a bone," whispered the stranger. "Come over here."

Youngster wagged his tail in a very friendly manner and ran up to the stranger. "Where is it?" he asked, thinking the newcomer was a most generous fellow.

"Right under that pile of grass and leaves and twigs," was the answer. "You will have to walk right on it and paw it over, but it is under there somewhere, I feel sure."

Youngster did not wait to hear any more. He ran straight to the heap and began pawing, while the stranger looked on with great interest, for it was Mr. Fox, you see, and he wanted to find out for sure if there was a trap set for him, and if so he must go around the other way that night when he came to call.

Youngster had not pawed long before something snapped and held him fast by one front paw, and it hurt so that Youngster's cries must have been heard for a long distance.

"Just as I suspected," said Mr. Fox, and with a bound he was off, for Mrs. Old Dog and all the hens and chickens and Mr. Rooster came running around the barn to see what in the world had happened.

The master came, too, and he opened the cruel trap and set Youngster free, but the paw was very painful for some time, and while he sat in the sun holding it up, his mother told him many things which went in at both ears and stayed there, for when he recovered Youngster was a wise dog and never gave his mother or the master cause to call him a silly puppy again. But it took a very painful lesson to make him wise, don't you think so?

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THE RIGHT THING at the RIGHT TIME

By MARY MARSHALL DUFFEE

THE FRIENDLY BOW

THE truly gracious woman is never niggardly with friendly bows. She does not save such form of recognition for persons she meets socially or for persons whom she has met formally. Especially in a fairly small community she makes a point always to say good morning to the sales people she deals with and if she meets in the street a salesman or saleswoman with whom she has had frequent business dealings she greets with a bow. This she does whether she is alone or with others.

Some people I know of think that this is a lowering of dignity. The fact is that it is just the opposite. If you pass frequently by the stand of a certain traffic policeman you should make it a habit to bow to him in a friendly manner. In a very small town where the street railway system consists of a few cars and a handful of conductors and motormen it is customary to bow to the conductors whom you have encountered day after day. Men and women with gracious manner always speak or bow to the elevator attendant who dally takes them to the floor of their place of business.

The fact is that right through your day as you go about your own town be it small or large there are dozens of occasions when you should bow in a friendly manner. There is the little woman huddled on the corner from whom you buy your evening paper, the ice man who brings the ice, the vegetable peddler. These people you do not know socially. You may even feel quite superior to them. But it does not mean that you should fail to speak to them or to greet them with a sincere bow of friendliness when you see them.

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Spoiled It All.

Ethel—Stella's marriage was a failure.
Clara—Yes; I understand her husband's wealthy father married again.

A LINE O' CHEER

By John Kendrick Bangs.

THE VOICE OF CHEER

WHEN days are dark, and winds are chill, And life seems stark with pressing ill, Deep in my soul I seem to hear A voice unroll that sings of cheer, And lights the way through what I grope Unto a day of peace and hope.
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YOUR HAND

How to Read Your Characteristics and Tendencies—the Capabilities or Weaknesses That Make for Success or Failure as Shown in Your Palm

ILLNESS SHOWN IN THE HAND

A NERVOUS complaint, left as the aftermath of an illness, is indicated in the hand by a branch rising from a black spot on the line of life. Inspect the mount of the moon for a spot that is marked clearly, and note whether the skin of the hand is dry and covered with a network of lines. In that case, disease of the nervous system, of varying degrees of seriousness, may be suspected. If the nails are moderately long, but wide and bluish in tint, there is danger of nervous prostration.

An island on the line of the head, with the third angle of the triangle (the intersection of the line of health and the line of life) badly formed, and with small lines cutting the line of life, is an indication of neuralgia.

If the nails are short, flat and thin, and of triangular shape, and if all the principal lines of the palm are poorly marked, a disposition to paralysis is to be feared. And if there is a star at the end of the line of fate, with a star also at the end of the line of life in both hands, we may prognosticate death by paralysis.

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A Little Nation.

"What's the population of your country?"
"Five million."
"Why, you maintain an army of 600,000 men."
"Well, we have to provide some diversion for our king. He doesn't care much about golf or motoring."—Birmingham Age-Herald.

