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Changing The Day

A Shrewd Move That Brought Its Reward

By RAYMOND CAMPBELL

Alphonse set the coffeepot close to Sheldon's hand and retired to the bar. The dinner rush was over, and he was certain that no one would come now until after the theaters let out.

Meanwhile the two young people at the table would surely chat for half an hour or so, which time Alphonse might spend with profit in discussing with the fat bartender certain nice points in the mixing of fancy beverages.

Meanwhile his two patrons sipped their coffee, and Sheldon lit the cigar that Alphonse had brought. When he dined alone the cigar came from the corner box on the five cent end, but when the young lady came Alphonse always brought a perfect from the box in the ice chest with an elaborately casual "The usual, monsieur."

This was intended to impress the guest with the belief that Sheldon habitually smoked fat perfectos with red and gold sashes. Tonight Alphonse's elaborate politeness was ignored by the usually genial Sheldon.

"Now for the news," he began as the waiter headed for the bar. "I couldn't wait for Saturday to tell you, though it is only two days off."

"Isn't it funny that we always fall back on Saturday night?" commented Bess. "I don't know when we have been out to dinner in the middle of the week."

"Never, I guess," agreed Sheldon. "You see, Saturday is a sort of holiday. I get my salary, and you get your check from the publishers, and we're both happy and content, even if not in agreement."

"We would be in agreement if you would only stop considering a proposal as an essential feature of the 'Saturday celebration,'" reminded Bess, with a show of severity. "You must go and spoil it all by proposing, Fred, when I've told you long ago that to marry would spoil my career. I am making a little name for myself in the art world, and I can't keep house and paint too."

"And I've told you," retorted Fred, "that I would not stop asking you to marry me until you said 'Yes.' I guess I've proposed to you sixty times in the last sixty weeks, Bess, and I'm good for sixty times sixty if I have to hold out that long."

"Did you ask me out to dinner to propose to me?" demanded Bess. "Not primarily," he admitted. "What I wanted to tell you was that my big chance has come at last. Benny Groll has made a good contract, and he needs a man to put a little money and a lot of time into the business. I have more experience than money, but Ben wants me, and he'll give me a half interest if I'll come in. It's what I've been working and waiting for ever since I came to town, Bess, and this is to celebrate my good luck."

A slender hand was stretched across the table and grasped his own. "Dear boy, I am so glad," she said sincerely. "You have worked hard, and you are entitled to your reward."

"Which is why I am going to ask for it," retorted Sheldon. "I am going to break my usual custom and propose on Thursday instead of Saturday, Bess. I want you to work for, dear. It will be pretty hard camping out with the construction gang and working on the job with the field corps. I want to come back to camp every night and feel that I have done another good day's work for you."

"Work, like virtue, should be its own reward," paraphrased Bess. Sheldon shook his head impatiently. "I know all that," he said, "but that sounds better than it works out. I want to feel that when the job is done and Groll & Sheldon become a firm of importance Mrs. Sheldon is proud of what her husband has done."

"I shall always be proud of what you do, Fred," reminded Bess. "We two are the only ones from the old town in all this big city. We have always been chums, and of course I shall be proud of your great achievements."

"That's not what I want," said Fred impatiently. "Of course I am going after this chance, no matter what, and I'll work as hard without your promise as with it, but it will lend sweetness to the labor, Bess, if you tell me that I may work for you."

"Won't you take a career by proxy, dear? Do you want to work

to the end of your days and live the loveless life? Aren't there times when you want to give it all up and just stop worrying about checks that publishers do not send and canvases that don't sell, though you know that they are as good as some that bring big money? Don't you tire of your career sometimes, and don't you feel as though it would be nice to let some one else do the worrying?"

"And if I do?" she asked, with an odd little note in her voice.

"Then let me carry the burden," he pleaded. "Let me do the planning for you. In six months from now I shall be at the top of the heap and making money, but you can make those six months of toil very pleasant, dear, if you will only listen to your heart—and me."

"I have listened to you," she reminded, with a little laugh. "Why, Freddy, there has not been a Saturday night in more than a year that you have not urged me to marry you. I'd like to, dear, but there is my career."

"Does it all pay?" he demanded. "Is it worth all the worry and the contriving?"

"Perhaps," she said uncertainly, and Sheldon pressed the advantage.

"Wouldn't it be nice if you didn't have to scrimp and scrape and plan the spending of every penny?" he demanded. "Wouldn't it be nice to have a real home instead of a three room flat, to eat regular meals instead of chafing dish messes and to—well, to have me across the table every night instead of just Saturdays? It would be our own table, too," he reminded, "and not a table d'hôte."

"Perhaps." It was spoken so low that Sheldon had to lean across the table to catch the whispered word. But he did catch it, and his face beamed satisfaction.

"And you will marry me?" he cried delightedly. This time he did not hear, but he knew that the coveted answer had been spoken, and he caught the hand that toyed nervously with the cup.

He spoke no word, for none was needed. Their eyes told each other messages that never have been put into words; spoke a language that only lovers know—and Sheldon was content.

It was Alphonse whose discreet but suggestive cough from the doorway leading to the main room recalled them to more earthly matters and an unpaid check. Sheldon drew a bill from his pocket and laid it upon the tray.

"Keep the change," he said, "and celebrate our good fortune." Then Alphonse, helping him into his overcoat, assured his radiant customer in French and English that it should be done.

Alphonse's thanks followed them even out upon the street, where Sheldon tucked Bess' arm into his own with a new air of proprietorship that the girl found very comforting.

"Fred," she whispered, "did you know that I was tired and depressed today?"

"I was only taking chances," he explained, with a happy laugh. "I thought it out last night when I was almost certain that Benny would put the deal through. I figured that you always felt as I did when you had money in your pocketbook on Saturdays—and that you'd feel as I do two days before pay day. It was worth taking a chance by changing the day."

Bess patted his arm affectionately. "I wish you had found that out before," she whispered. "It is only from Saturday to Tuesday that I cared about a career."

Of and Off.
 The grammatical use of the English "of" and "off" proves to be a stumbling block to the average foreign element.

"Here's the paper you bought off me," is the usual expression of the newsboy, but it was a little startling for a woman of more than necessary embarrassment to be summoned to the back door to hear, "Here's the lady Mrs. Blank borrowed off of you."

More startling was the griever servant's retort when the master, after vainly trying to dissect the steak, angrily demanded, "Where in blazes did you get this steak, anyway?"

"Why, I got it off of William!"—New York Tribune.

A Bismarck Story.

Lord Amphilophy once found Bismarck reading Andersen's story on the "Ugly Duckling," which relates how a duck hatched a swan's egg and how the cygnet was jeered at by his putative brethren, the ducklings, until one day a troop of lordly swans floating down the river saluted him as one of their race. "Ah," observed Bismarck, "it was a long time before my poor mother could be persuaded that in hatching me she had not produced a goose."

MUTILATED CURRENCY.

Often Used in Attempt to Cheat the Treasury Department.

Many efforts are made to cheat Uncle Sam through the redemption division of the treasury department, which division has to do with redeeming partly destroyed government currency.

Once a man in a western state sent in half of a ten dollar bill, accompanied by an affidavit to the effect that while on a spree he had used the other half to light a cigar. The half he forwarded was nicely charred along the inner edge, and the story would have been accepted by treasury officials had it not been that within twenty-four hours there was received from a bank in the same state the other half of the note.

The fact was that while more or less intoxicated the man had struggled for possession of the bill with some one who had wrested half of it from him; the despoiler had turned his half into the bank and received five dollars for it; the intoxicated man, recovering his senses, had found the other half in his pocket and, not wishing to lose his money, had conceived the plan of singeing the edge of the note and claiming that the other half had been destroyed. So he committed perjury in an attempt to rob the government.

A man in Cleveland sent an affidavit to the treasury department, accompanying the singed halves of two twenty dollar bills and one ten dollar bill. This affidavit was typewritten and in perfect form. It set forth that the deponent was a commercial traveler; that after returning from a journey he had been cleaning out his traveling bag when inadvertently he had thrown into the fire an envelope containing \$50 in bills; that in accordance with section 50 and so he would like to have the money restored to him, etc.

Twenty-four hours later a big shipment of mutilated currency came from a subtreasury in the west. An official asked whether there were any half notes in this shipment. In four or five minutes a clerk brought him the missing halves of the bills the Cleveland man had sent in.

The attempt to defraud was plain. The matter was at once put into the hands of the secret service division, and a man was sent west to investigate. The man who had made the affidavit confessed at once. He had cut the bills in halves and for one-half of them obtained \$25. The other half he singed and attached to his affidavit. The man forfeited his liberty for a year and a half.—Washington Star.

Wood in Egyptian Stonework.

Probably the oldest timber in the world which has been subjected to the use of man is that found in the ancient temples of Egypt in connection with the stonework, which is known to be at least 4,000 years old. This, the only wood used in the construction of the temples, is in the form of ties holding the end of the stone to another. When two blocks were laid in place an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, in which a tie shaped like an hourglass is driven. It is therefore very difficult to force any stone from its position.

Nervous Headaches.

A well known medical authority once said: "Sleep, if taken at the right moment, will prevent an attack of nervous headache. If the subjects of such headaches will watch the symptoms of its coming they can notice that it begins with a feeling of weariness or heaviness. This is the time a sleep of an hour, or even two, as nature guides, will eventually prevent the headache. If not taken just then it will be too late, for after the attack is fairly under way it is impossible to get sleep until far into the night."

Blacksmiths as Dentists.

Before dentistry had made much progress the blacksmith combined his labors at the forge with operations with the forceps.

His "patients" would go to the forge and submit to a rough and ready operation with the most suitable blacksmith's tools available.

"Years ago the blacksmith's forge was the recognized dentistry, and even now one often meets aged folk in out of the way places who can recall having teeth extracted in the village smithy," says an English writer.

An Odd Blunder.

When the British admiralty built the splendid naval barracks at Chatham it fitted up one of the largest rooms in fine style for court martials and had "Court Martial" inscribed on a big brass plate on the door. When it was about to be used for the first time the discovery was made that the regulations require all naval court martials to be held on the water.

HOSPITALITY IN SYRIA.

A Custom That May Have a Bearing on a Passage in Scripture.

Approaching his hoped for guest, a Syrian engages him in something like the following dialogue, characterized by a glow of feeling which the translation can only faintly reveal: "Ennobles us by your presence."

"I would be ennobled, but I cannot accept."

"That cannot be."

"Yes, yes, it must be."

"No, I swear against you by our friendship and by the life of God. I love just to acquaint you with my bread and salt."

"I swear also that I find it impossible to accept. Your bread and salt are known to all."

"Yes, do it just for our own good. By coming to us you come to your own home. Let us repay your bounty to us."

"Astaghfero Allah (by the mercy of God) I have not bestowed any bounty upon you worth mentioning." Here the host seizes his guest by the arm and with an emphatic, "I will not let you go," pulls at him and would drag him bodily into his house. Then the guest, happy in being vanquished "with honor," consents to the invitation.

Do you now understand fully the meaning of the passage in the fourteenth chapter of Luke's gospel? "A certain man made a great supper, and bade many." . . . and they all with one consent began to make excuse. . . . And the Lord said unto the servant, "Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled."—Abraham Mitrie Rihbey in Atlantic Monthly.

Military Masters.

Alexander the Great's active military career began when he was only eighteen years old and ended at thirty-three; Hannibal's lasted from thirteen to forty-seven; Caesar's from forty to fifty-five; Gustavus' from sixteen to thirty-eight; Frederick's from twenty-eight to fifty-one, and Napoleon's from twenty-seven to forty-six. When thirty-five years old Napoleon said of himself: "One has only a certain time for war. I shall be good for it but six years more; then even I shall stop." His downward career began when he was forty.—New York Sun.

Havana.

Havana, or San Cristobal de la Habana, as it was originally named, was the last of seven cities founded in Cuba by the island's conqueror, the Adelantado Diego Velasquez, the date being July 25, 1515. Since that was twenty-three years after the well known Columbus date there can't be many new world cities older than Havana, assuming that most of the other six in Cuba have since disappeared.

The best lines its point when he who makes it is the best to laugh.—Schiller.



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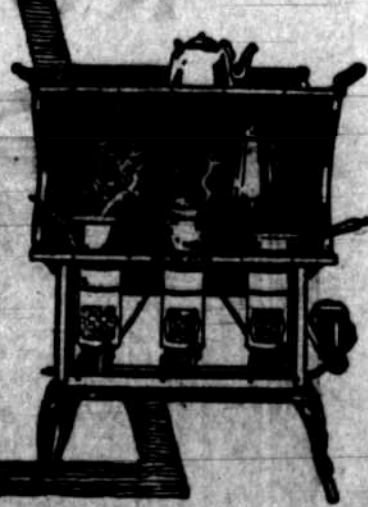
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