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Turning the Scale

(Original)

Who is there who cannot look back to some trifling incident that changed the whole course of his life? If a had not happened to meet B on a street corner on a certain day twenty years ago...

One day Jim Beverly, a countryman who had been long hunting for a job in the city, becoming discouraged, made up his mind to go home...

"How are you, Torbert?" he said presently in a low voice. "How did you get my name was Torbert?" asked Jim, suspecting a confidence game.

"By several things—initials on suit case, red head." "Well, suppose I am Torbert. What then?" "Got the stuff in the case?" "Suppose I have."

"I'll be on hand at N, to take it off your hands. Three days. Better not hurry. Say Friday, 11 at night." "Where?" "Why, at the Northfield House, you know, as arranged."

The man got up and left the car at the first stop. While the train was rolling through the city limits a couple of men came down the aisle, looking here and there at passengers. Beverly got it cheap, took it to his room, put his belongings in a trunk and went to the train. A man took a seat beside him who kept glancing out of the corner of his eye at him.

"I'll trouble you to open that case," said one of the men. Beverly demurred at first, then he opened the case. There was nothing in it but the remnants of a few underclothes. The man looked disappointed.

Now, it was on the tip of Jim's tongue to tell the whole story so far as it has been told here, but it may be judged from his dialogue with the man who had sat beside him that he was better adapted to receive a man to give information than to give it. The man went on, and Jim got out when the train reached his station.

The Weaver's Knot

By FRANK H. SWEET

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O H, dear! I can't do it. I can't. I've been trying a whole week now, and I ain't no nearer than when I started. I might as well give up tryin' an' go back 'taint in me."

There was a pitiful despair in the speaker's voice, and the long, lean face looked so woe-begone as to be almost grotesque. But the eyes were beautiful—beautiful and pathetic, like the ox's when overworked on the mountain pleases when caged and brought from its solitude—large, full orbbed, and glistening with bright, moistened uncertainty upon new things.

"You're a soft an' smooth an' long an' mine!" She held up her big, toll worn hands as more eloquent than words, and Jossie nodded an assent. "Yes, fingers help," she agreed, "but you'll wear smooth in time."

"I don't know," skeptically. "My fingers are pretty high big's your own an' bout as chunked. I ain't a bit of a chaner, but they're what tie the knots. Mine's been all roughed up choppin' down trees in the woods an' handlin' the goat drivin' cattle an' peelin' tanbark an' things like that."

"But you said you couldn't earn over a dollar a week there at most," reminded Jossie, "and here you can make five or six after you learn how to weave." "I'm making that now, and a something more. You want to do some of things for the brothers and sisters you've been telling me about and for your sick mother. If you give up, you've got to give up, the least bit of a chaner, I'd never give up," said Melindy, a flush coming to her lean face.

"I'm afraid so. In the end ye shall have to put in steam power, I suppose, though that will be more expensive than our little mill warrants." They walked to the end of the dam and leaned against the log frame of the water gate. Fifteen minutes passed. Then the superintendent uttered a wondering exclamation and the lesser forward, peering down at the water.

"Great Scott!" he exclaimed, "four inches of water since we've been standing here! That's seven inches and plenty enough to keep all the water in the stream! The water's regular coming down! What's it mean, anyhow? There ain't a cloud in the sky, and there ain't a wind. But never mind, though, I know what it means," hastily. "It means a full day's work for tomorrow and the next day and maybe for the next. Excuse me now, sir. You can stay and watch the show, or you can go. I must run and that mill started."

Twenty minutes later the owner was still standing there, beaming, but perplexed. Then he saw a girl coming toward him with a spade over her shoulder, her hands soiled and her face red from recent exertion. "How's the water comin' on?" she asked affably. "It's bein' smoothed, but I cannot understand the reason, only the result. I hope it will keep on like this for awhile."

"I'll keep on pretty well, but not like this," she answered in a matter of fact voice. "I guess the water'll come down 'bout twice as fast as it did before, an' it'll come pretty steady." He looked at her in amazement. "What's that you know where it comes from?" he exclaimed. "Yes, it's just a pond I tapped," she answered. "I was lookin' for lilies an' went clear round the pond, an' I guess an' much as I got over six acres, I guess an' on the other side there's a brook most as big as this that runs off into a swamp. An' I didn't see any place where water run in. That made me think the pond was full of spring water. But I didn't think anything special till I got back to this stream an' set down. Then I noticed water tricklin' in, that made me know the pond was higher, an' I got up an' looked round. 'Taint in me, an' the above!" "And you cut through?" he asked, intensely interested. "She nodded. "Twa'n't more'n ten feet. I commenced at the river an' dug 'bout three or four feet till I got near the pond, then I tapped through, inquirin' in the face, 'I guess this means a good deal to you, more than just the work and the dollars.' Melindy turned her face away, but not before Jossie saw in the depths of the big, patient eyes a frightened shadow.

the weaver shop and Melindy took perhaps the crudest of all the work hands. But then Melindy Weeds had come from the wildest of the back country, walking thirty-five miles with her baggage tied in a newspaper. The water supply was a small stream as inefficient as the rest of the mill outfit. During seven months of the year it did all that could be asked, and the mill ran full time out through the other five, when little rain fell and there was no snow to melt, the stream often shrank to a thin thread, and then the great water wheel ceased to revolve until the stream rose a few inches, when it would start again and run for an hour or so and then stop for the water once more to rise.

During Melindy's first week the mill had made full time, for there had been rain, but the day after her talk with Jossie (his temporary supply became exhausted, and the stream commenced to shrink. When they went out to dinner, Jossie cast an anxious glance at the mill, and saw that the water was low. "When the mill bars run together," she said to Melindy, "the water'll be too low to move it. And from the way we'll have to stop, and the mill won't be run till now it'll be by 2 o'clock. We'll likely stay shut down till 5 or so, then start up and run an hour or two in the evening to help make up for the loss. And from the way it's likely to be the next day, we'll likely have another rain. Well, I'll bring in some crocheting work to help fill in time, but I guess my \$5 this week won't be over \$4."

"I can't do crocheting work an' things like that," returned Melindy, "so I'll look up some other work." "I'll give you \$4 a week, an' you'll be over \$4," she said. "I'll give you \$4 a week, an' you'll be over \$4," she said. "I'll give you \$4 a week, an' you'll be over \$4," she said.

"Where can I find a shovel?" she asked the yardman. He jerked his thumb toward a small building. "In the tool house there, I guess," he answered. "Found some well poles ye want to take up, eh? Well, yipe the shovel off dry just where ye're through an' put it back just where ye find it."

"You've been here long enough to see what hands do," and can do the work of a man. There'll be warps and cuts of cloth to carry and help of all kinds to do. Good land, there'll be work enough. We'll pay \$4 a week at first. Will you stay?" "Yes, please do, Melindy," urged Jossie.

Melindy looked from one to the other doubtfully, then her face cleared. "Yes, I'll stay," she answered. "There's plenty of work I can do. I've seen that. I guess I can earn the money." Two months later she came to Jossie one morning, her face radiant. "See, Jossie," she breathed, "I can do it. I can get a loom an' weave. See." And she took a thread and passed her fingers over it, and behold, there was a weaver's knot!

Clara's Joke. Little ten-year-old Clara had heard a joke at a friend's party. It was entirely new to her, and as soon as she returned home she repeated it, with much elaboration of detail, to her father. He had heard it many times before, but his unique treatment at Clara's hands amused him so much that he repeated it before she was half through. Clara was much astonished and ejaculated: "Why, papa, what made you laugh before I had finished?" "Oh, my father said exactly, 'the story was so funny that I couldn't help it!'" "Well," replied Clara, "it takes you quicker to see a joke than anybody I ever saw!"—Bohemian Magazine.

He Loaned Money to Papa. She—Have you ever loaned papa any money? He—Once or twice. She—That must be the reason he has forbidden me to marry you. He says anybody that parts with his money as easily as you do will end in the poorhouse.—Judge.

A Modern Cook. "I was lookin' for lilies an' went clear round the pond, an' I guess an' much as I got over six acres, I guess an' on the other side there's a brook most as big as this that runs off into a swamp. An' I didn't see any place where water run in. That made me think the pond was full of spring water. But I didn't think anything special till I got back to this stream an' set down. Then I noticed water tricklin' in, that made me know the pond was higher, an' I got up an' looked round. 'Taint in me, an' the above!" "And you cut through?" he asked, intensely interested. "She nodded. "Twa'n't more'n ten feet. I commenced at the river an' dug 'bout three or four feet till I got near the pond, then I tapped through, inquirin' in the face, 'I guess this means a good deal to you, more than just the work and the dollars.' Melindy turned her face away, but not before Jossie saw in the depths of the big, patient eyes a frightened shadow.

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in me something," she answered soberly. "I guess you'd better not stop over it any more. Back where I came from we don't have folks give us anything, an' my work would've fetched less 'n 5 cents."

When she returned to the mill, Jossie was with her as before. "The overseer's been here talking to me," she said hesitatingly, "and—doesn't seem to think it's any fault for you to keep on at the knot. He wants me to take on another girl to show. I'm awfully sorry, Melindy." But Melindy did not seem in the least disconcerted.

"I've known it since the first day," she returned composedly, "but you wanted me to keep on tryin'. This'll save both of us wastin' more time." As she was turning away the overseer came hurrying toward them, embarrassed and apologetic. "You haven't told her yet?" he asked of Jossie. Then, glancing at her face, "Yes, I see you have. Well, it was all a big mistake what I said. I've just been talking with the superintendent. We want Miss Melindy to take a job as spare hand."

"As a gift?" asked Melindy coldly. "No," eagerly. "As real, needed help." "I've known it since the first day," she returned composedly, "but you wanted me to keep on tryin'. This'll save both of us wastin' more time."

The older man gets delicate a philosopher, the less time he has to learn things he thought he knew when he was a boy.—Chumas.

Life to be worthy of a rational being must be always in progression. We must always purpose to do more or better than in times past.

A curious feature the heart is. That organ has no nerves of sensation, and consequently a pain in the heart is an utter impossibility.

In the Chapel of Saints in the Ursuline convent, Quebec, there burns a votive lamp, which was lighted in 1717 and has never since been extinguished.

Vessels drawing fourteen feet of water can sail from the Atlantic to the head of Lake Superior, a distance of fully 2,000 miles.

Knowledge would be more general if there could only be convinced that they do not know as much as they think they do.

Australia holds an odd record. For nearly a thousand miles along her south coast not a single stream reaches the sea.

Walnuts are supposed by some folks to cure rheumatism and toothache and for this purpose, they say, should be carried in the pocket.

A bushel of sunflower seed produces a gallon of excellent oil, and the seeds are also very useful for making poultry lay in winter.

The word osteomergner was originally coined—made up, in apple script—by Queen Elizabeth's day.

The village of Elm, in the Canton Glarus, Switzerland, is so surrounded by tall mountains that it gets no sun at all in winter.

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