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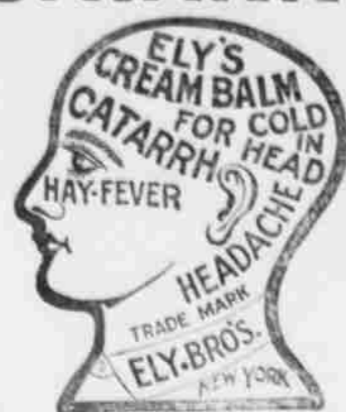
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MY UNKNOWN FRIEND.

A Flow of Wealth Came From a Hidden Source.

By THOMAS R. DEAN.
(Copyright, 1919, by American Press Association.)

I was thirty years old and had not saved a penny when I fell in love with Emma Earle. I told her of my love, but also told her that we could not be anything more to each other than friends, owing to my ill success. She was a practical girl and admitted that a man who had reached my age and had not forged ahead at all was very unlikely ever to be able to support a family comfortably.

"You are too good hearted," she said. "To achieve financial success. Most of the wealth attained is by saving. To save one must shut one's eyes to other people's needs, their sufferings."

I was obliged to admit that there was a lot of good sense in this, though it was not in accordance with the teachings of Christianity, which Emma and I both professed. It seemed best for us to give up all idea of mar-



HE TURNED AND STARTED TO RUN.

riage, though we concluded to remain friends. This was a very unsatisfactory arrangement and was very wearing on both of us.

One day I received a letter which read as follows:

Office of the Acme Mining Company, Antelope, Colo., Oct. 1919.

Dear Sir—I intend to open an office in New York for the transaction of the business of our company, principally the transfer of shares. You have been recommended to me as a suitable person to take charge of this office. The salary attached will be \$10 a month. The position is open to you. If you accept please notify me. Yours truly,

SAMUEL LANGFORD, President.

Who Samuel Langford was or who had recommended me to him I had not the remotest idea. Nevertheless I made inquiries about the Acme Mining company and learned that it was a paying institution, the shares standing considerably above par. Langford owned a majority of the stock. He lived at Antelope, giving all his attention to the mine. I endeavored in every way to get a clue as to why he, a stranger to me, had taken me up and enabled me to earn nearly twice the income I had ever earned before, but I failed.

I wrote accepting the position, at the same time requesting Mr. Langford to tell me why I had been selected to fill it. Neither in the return letter nor in any that followed did he make any reference to my request. In due time I found myself in charge of his eastern business, which was principally transferring stock, though I often made purchases for him and shipped the goods to him at Antelope. After awhile I wrote him to know if he was satisfied with me and if the position was likely to be permanent. He replied to both questions in the affirmative.

Emma and I concluded to get married, though she insisted that we live on two-thirds of our income and save the other third. I assented to this, but owing to wedding expenses it was two months before we were able to begin our saving, and on the third month an old friend called on me with a pitiful story of sickness at home and nothing with which to buy either provisions or medicines and our savings for that month went to him.

I had scarcely given him the money when I received a letter from my employer advising me (confidentially) to put what money I had into the stock of the company. My wife insisted on replying to his letter, telling him that I hadn't a cent to invest and why. He replied to her that he had bought 1,000 shares of the stock of the company for me and would hold it till he thought it time to sell. We were somewhat surprised, but Emma, who is a level-headed woman and had no confidence in mining stocks—and justly so—said that we wouldn't presume on any profit we might make.

It was only a week after the receipt of Mr. Langford's letter that on going to my office one morning I found a crowd of investors there waiting for me to transfer shares. They told me that they had bought under private advices and intimated that there was a movement of some kind on foot. The shares had raised a few points on the market and the next day made a sudden jump. Then reports came that a very rich vein had been struck in

the Acme mine. The price of the shares continued to rise for a week or two, then, after slight fluctuations, settled down to about 200 per cent above what it had been when I was advised to buy it.

One morning I received a check from my employer for about \$2,000, payable to my wife's order. There was no letter accompanying it, but pinned to it was a bit of paper on which was written, "Profit on 1,000 shares of Acme mining stock." Emma and I had watched the rise in the price of the stock and knew that if our mysterious friend had really bought the shares for us we would have the profit sent us, but my wife insisted that there would be some reason why we wouldn't get it. When it came we were almost as surprised as if we had known nothing about the matter. We were certainly delighted.

And now we began to be consumed by a gnawing curiosity as to who was our unknown friend. We spent all our leisure time trying to think of some one who for some reason had thus favored us, going over every relative and every friend both of hers and mine. I recalled a number of persons to whom I had loaned or given small sums of money, but not one of them had ever prospered, and certainly none of them was named Langford.

I received my \$2,000 at a time when, owing to a financial panic, there were many bargains to be picked up in dividend-paying stocks. I invested the amount and within ten months had doubled my capital—that is, I owned \$4,000 of securities paying me a good interest. About a year after my first acquisition Mr. Langford telegraphed me one morning to buy some shares of the Sarah Ann company, located in the vicinity of the Acme mine. I put my \$4,000 into the venture. In a short time news came that an extension of the valuable vein in the Acme mine had been struck in the Sarah Ann. I bought the shares of the latter at 7 cents and sold them for \$2.

I had now an income sufficient to support my family very comfortably without earning a cent by my own labor. I determined to go to Colorado and find out who this man was who had placed a fortune in my hand. I wrote him that I proposed to put some one in the office to attend to the business during my absence and would be with him in a couple of weeks.

I received a reply to this letter notifying me that he would be in New York before long and if I wished to see him I could then have an opportunity, but that it would avail me nothing, since I would not see one who was at all familiar to me. As for the thanks I had sent him, he had much more reason to thank me than I had to thank him.

After the receipt of this information Emma and I again reread our letter to remember some one who was thus indebted to me, but not with my better success than before. Langford continued to put me up to what might be done to buy or to sell, but never did so except on accurate information of the mine.

A time came when my investments gave me all the income I required, and I resolved to investigate my benefactor. Without notifying him of my intention, I went to Colorado, and one morning appeared in his office, which meanwhile had been removed to Colorado Springs. A man over fifty years of age was pointed out to me by the clerks as Langford. He rose, pressed my hand and said to me:

"Dine with me this evening at my house. Meanwhile say nothing to any one here about our connection."

He bowed me out, and to kill time I went about indirectly pumping people about my benefactor. No one knew anything of his antecedents before he came to Colorado in a very forlorn condition and went about with a pick like any other prospector. In time he found a hole which promised well and sold it for enough to set him up comfortably as a mine seeker. Other mines fell into his hands, the Acme from his having mislaid his finder. Since he required the controlling interest in that mine he had made money rapidly.

When I met Mr. Langford at his house I saw not only by his manner and mode of living, but by his family, that he was a man sprung from the lowly walks of life. After dinner he took me into a private room. We lit cigars, and he said:

"Do you remember one morning when you were about eighteen years old, walking on a road with a shotgun on your shoulder and meeting an escaped jailbird?"

"Yes. Tell me something more."

"On seeing you he turned and started to run. You pointed your gun at him and called on him to halt. Being defenseless, he gave himself up."

"I remember very well. But go on."

"He told you how he had been born in poverty in the city; how without parents to guide him, after he was some six years old, he had fallen into such a life as such boys must inevitably fall into and had at last been sent to state prison. There, under the influence of a lovely woman who ministered to the prisoners, he had attained to a desire to lead a different life. He had escaped. His story touched your heart. You went to your home and brought him some clothes. He concealed his stripes in a wood. You gave him all the money you had with you, \$18.63, and sent him on his way into a new world. I am that man, and I vowed then that if I ever became prosperous I would hunt you up and return your loan with interest."

"I have gone over every person I have ever helped," I replied, "and remembered you, but I never dreamed that I was indebted for my good fortune to a former jailbird."

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