

ELDER BECTON

The Dancing Evangelist

An Intimate Study of the Man

By RALPH MATTHEWS

Every morning at 180 St. Nicholas Avenue the postman deposits a big bundle of mail. The elevator man sorts it out into little piles according to name and apartment number. There is always one very big pile after he finishes. That big pile goes to the apartment on the seventh floor, which houses the Elder G. Willson Becton and the gospel tract party.

Most of these letters are written in feminine hand, some with the free flourish of vivacious youth, some in the nervous, jerky hand of religious fanatics, the pain torn scribble of invalids, the cramped style of decrepit old age.

Some of them bear the faint and delicate odor of a dainty perfume, some are on bits of old scrap paper.

Some are asking the solution to a secret problem; some are confessing a hidden sin; some are asking prayers for a wayward son, daughter or husband; some are giving the Elder advice about religion; some are anxious about his health.

Some—yes you guessed it—some are love letters from lonesome, heart-broken women; intrepid, misguided girls just blossoming into womanhood, who find in this smooth-tongued pulpiter the answer to their first call to romance.

Some are from enchantresses who would make the dapper man of God and drag him down into the depths as a tribute to their charm.

There are letters from aged mothers telling of the effect his sermons had on the lives of their wayward children.

There are letters telling of miracles wrought in the lives of believers who were cured of ailments by faith. Elder Becton gently tosses the love letters into the waste basket.

The Dime

To Becton, the consecrated dime is a means to an end. With Mr. Woolworth and Mr. Kresge,

THIS MAN CALLED BECTON

- How and why did he become an evangelist?
- Why does he dress as a Broadway star?
- What is contained in the hundreds of letters he gets daily?
- What is the secret of his power over women?
- Why did he break his first three love engagements?
- Will he and Ma Becton ever be reconciled?
- How does he prepare his sermons?
- What is the significance of the consecrated dime?
- Does he really perform miracles?
- What are his habits and hobbies?

These articles will explain these things.

PART II—THE MIRACLES

the dime is also a means to an end, but with Becton, it's different.

The dime to him is merely a symbol of faith. When he walks across the rostrum and whispers "Come, my lambs, hold up a dime; consecrate it to the Lord and ask Him to help you; ask Him to wipe away your sins; ask Him to cure your ailments; consecrate, consecrate the dime and pray," it means simply have faith in what you ask. Believe that by consecrating the dime, small as it is, God will answer your prayer.

It is the resignation to divine power that accomplishes the end desired; not the mere giving of the dime.

Can Quote Bible

The Elder Becton can quote many Biblical allusions to substantiate his theory. He will tell you of the lepers who asked Christ to cleanse them and Christ told them to go and present themselves to the high priests, knowing full well that they could not reach the priests because they were unclean and the doors of the temple were closed against them. The lepers knew this, too, but they started forth putting faith in his

bidding. En route, they were cleansed and did reach the priests. Faith cured them, the Elder Becton will tell you; not reaching the priests.

The Case of Mrs. Blake

Elder Becton will also tell you about Naomi Blake in Philadelphia, who had been ill for years and had been given up by specialists to die. Medicine did no good.

Mrs. Blake had been hearing about Becton, who was then at Tindley Temple. She insisted that she be carried there. Her wish was granted. When the consecration dime part of the service came, she held up her dime, shut her eyes and prayed. She said she felt as though a bucket of cold water had been poured over her. She began to improve. Today she is well. Elder Becton has an affidavit signed by herself and the specialist.

No Murder, No Suicide

The Elder might tell you of the woman who came to his apartment and begged him to let her furnish one room for him. Nothing was too good.

Had he not saved her from committing one of the greatest crimes that Harlem had seen for many a day? Was she not heart sick from a chronic tumor? Had not her hus-



ELDER BECTON
(A crayon drawing sketched by Ralph Matthews.)

band treated her kindly? Was she not on the verge of killing both him and herself? When life seemed darkest did not she crawl wild-eyed, glaring into the balcony of Salem Church, lean over and hear him tell of the power of faith? Did she not believe and did not her tumor disappear? Her husband's attitude changed. Her life was made over. She was happy. These stories are legion.

The Elder practices what he preaches. He believes in the power of the consecrated dime. He uses it to wiggle out of his own difficulties, financial and otherwise.

Once when he was conducting a meeting in Dallas, Texas, he ran short of funds and at the close was unable to transport his troupe to the next city. His managers hustled around with worried expressions on their faces. Becton did not worry. He consecrated his dime, doubled it and said to God:

"Now, Lord, I've been working for you; I've done my best. You told me that if I labored, you would pay me off. I told you, Lord, before I started out that I was a high priced man, but You wanted me. I need \$300 to get to my next engagement. I've got to go, Lord, or your work will suffer. Send me the money. I am consecrating a dollar to You now—my last dollar. I'm depending on You, Lord."

He Took the \$375

Becton waited. Before 24 hours had passed, persons, unsolicited, came to his aid, among them a sweet old saint with hair of white, who had sat night after night in the amen corner. "You're in trouble, son," she said. "The Lord sent me. I have money. I want to loan you as much as you need. Others came and made similar offers. Becton and his party left with \$375 that the Lord had sent in their pockets.

NEXT WEEK—The author will tell why the Elder dresses in the height of fashion and why he broke his first three engagements to wed.

barked the signals and out of the maze of figures, I got my number. Dropping back, with the quarterback holding the ball, I took my time as far as possible and booted the ball squarely. All around me, my teammates were taking out the Monroe players who bore down with vehemence and determination to block the kick.

Plunging through the line, they were making me their objective, but as I said before, the kick was a good one and the ball sailed majestically over the goal posts dropping on the other side for the extra point!

"Nothing has ever gripped me as much as the sight of that ball going over. Had I not seen it, I wouldn't have known what the cheering was all about, for both teams' supporters were wild.

"That day, I lost twelve pounds! On the team with me were Mc-Namara, later center at New York University, John Abbetemaroo, now a candidate for the Notre Dame team; the two Lewis brothers who are at Ohio State University, and Bruckner, quarterback, who was selected from all the men in the city as All-Scholastic quarterback that year.

"Playing at Columbia under Lou Little has been a thrilling adventure. Meeting the great teams of Dartmouth, Syracuse and the other teams we have played, each contains its own particular thrill, but there is work for every man on the team to do and we have little time to think what a marvelous thing it is. With such men as Ralph Hewitt playing with you, it is an inspiration.

EDITOR'S NOTE—Rivero established a batting record at Columbia by hitting four home runs in the first three games of the past season. He was robbed of another home run by virtue of the ground rules limiting a drive to two bases. His feats as a baseball player rival those of Eddie Collins when the famous second baseman played at Columbia over twenty-five years ago.

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SPORT THRILLS

AS TOLD TO AL WHITE
By MANUEL RIVERO
Columbia University Football Star

Prep School Game on Hottest Football Day of the Year Brought Manuel Rivero Greatest Thrill When He Kicked Winning Goal

Manuel Rivero is a newcomer in the headlines, but he has done enough to establish himself as a figure in the athletic world. Going to Columbia University in 1929 from Textile High School, Rivero quickly won fame as a baseball player. In 1930 was selected by the coach at that institution as a varsity half back.

Rivero, a short chap, scales 160 pounds, is fast on the football field, and a demon at bat in a baseball game. He played third base on the Columbia varsity and was selected as the best third baseman in the Eastern Intercollegiate Association.

He has twinkling black eyes and a ready smile. Although he has won distinction in his two years at Columbia, his major career is in front of him. He played football at Textile and was regarded as one of the best players in the city league.

Kicked Goal

"My greatest thrill," says Rivero, "came on the hottest day I ever played football. October 12, 1928, when the Textile High played James Monroe in a championship match at Monroe Field in the Bronx.

"That day was more suitable for baseball or swimming than it was for football. But a schedule is a schedule and we had to play.

"The stands were crowded with partisan groups. Half for Textile and half for Monroe. Cheer leaders vied with each other in trying to get the 'goat' of the opposition, but it interfered little with our playing.

"Back and forth across the field we seesawed with neither team enjoying an advantage over the other. They were pretty evenly matched, these two outfits. Tricks were of no avail. Line plunges, end runs, forward passes were all tried. Straight football and all kinds of football.

"In the final quarter, Textile managed to shove the ball across the goal for a touchdown.

"Came the pause after the mighty cheering squads whooped things up. The two teams lined up for the try for the extra point. In our minds, we wondered who our quarterback would call on to kick the ball.

"As we got down on the line, he

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