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Nan's Hundred Dollars

By EDGAR WELTON GOOLBY

FOR the second time Nan Paxton, sitting upon the edge of a chair, took the contents from the big official envelope, read the letter and smoothed upon her knee the piece of blue paper that accompanied it.

When she had finished she sank upon the floor and cried.

A hundred dollars! A small amount to be her entire share of a relative's estate, but a large amount to Nan—the most she had ever had at one time during the 22 years of her life. How many things for her home—her and Jim's home—she could procure with that! Jim had been out of work for a month and the rent was due and there were the grocer and the butcher to pay. But perhaps she could have a new carpet for the parlor—she had wanted one so long—and a few new dishes for the table. How surprised and pleased Jim would be—dear old Jamie!

With a happy laugh that dried her tears, Nan finally thrust the letter in a bureau drawer and returned to the kitchen, where her preparations for dinner had been interrupted by the postman's visit.

Then Jim came home—poor, patient, discouraged Jim, with his coarse clothes, his worn shoes and the pathetic stoop to his shoulders.

He came in quietly and taking a seat by the window, gazed at the wall in solemn silence. Nan thought at first to run to him and tell him of her good fortune, then decided to serve the surprise as desert to his dinner.

"What luck, Jamie?" she asked, stirring the frying potatoes with a wooden spoon.

"None at all," he answered, soberly. "Don't seem to be a vacancy anywhere, Nannie. I've been clear out to Westworth's, but he ain't needin' any one just now. Says he had to lay off two men Saturday. Times are gettin' dull, he says, and he has to cut expenses."

Nan did not reply, but stirred the potatoes vigorously.

Presently Jim arose and going into the kitchen sat down on the edge of the table. His forehead was furrowed with deep lines of care and anxiety.

"Nan," he said, after a long silence, "the boys at the mills want me to run for constable. They say they'll all vote for me and that I'm sure to be elected."

Nan looked up suddenly.

"For constable?" she asked. "Why, Jim?"

"And why not, Nannie?" he asked. "It pays about \$1,200 a year, and it's worth having. Thing what we could do with \$1,200 a year for two years, anyhow, Nan."

"I know," she answered, "but—but I'm afraid, Jamie."

"Afraid?" he demanded.

"I don't know anything about politics," she said, "and I'm afraid you might be defeated, and that would hurt—would make you feel more discouraged

than ever, wouldn't it?"

"But I can't be defeated," he replied. "All I need is the nomination, you know. Our party's in the majority and—and if I'm nominated, why that settles it, don't you see?"

"But are you sure of being nominated?" she asked, looking at him with hopeful eyes.

"The boys in the mills are for me to a man. Of course they are not all the party, but they are willing to work for me, and that would be a big start, don't you see?"

He grew enthusiastic and some of his enthusiasm was imparted to his wife.

"Oh, wouldn't it be nice if you could be elected," she said, pausing in her work to look at him proudly. Some called Jim Paxton shiftless, but to Nan he was always her big, true-hearted, unfortunate Jamie. "Twelve hundred—why that's a hundred dollars a month! Perhaps—we could buy a little home—Jamie."

"And you could have some new dresses and a new hat and—and there wouldn't be anything I wouldn't get for you, Nannie," she said, pausing in her work to look at him proudly.

He had left the table and was pacing the floor, nervously.

"And I can get the nomination, too," he continued; "I can get it, I tell you, I'm sure of all the laboring men's votes, and all I need is—"

"He paused and his face clouded.

"What, Jamie?"

"Is something I haven't got—something I can't get, Nannie," he said, gloomily.

He sighed and the old look of discouragement came into his face.

"It's this way," he said, after a moment, seeing the unspoken question in her eyes. "I'd have to have more than just the labor vote. Nan, I'd have to make a canvass—that is, I'd have to see every voter in our party and I'd have to get others to vote for me. Of course these fellows would have to be paid, and then there'd be other expenses—quite a lot of other expenses, and—it would cost considerable. But I ain't got any money, Nan."

Nan's face clouded.

"How much—do you think—it would cost you—Jamie?" she asked, very slowly, trying to think.

"Oh, I could pull through on a hundred dollars," he replied. "Yes, a hundred dollars, as well as a thousand, for I ain't got no show of gettin' it, that I can see."

Nan gasped. A hundred dollars—should she let him have it? Should she stake it all upon the turn of a political wheel?

"Jamie!" she spoke suddenly, almost sharply. "Are you sure—real sure—you could get the nomination if—if you had a hundred dollars?"

"As sure as anything on earth," he replied. "Why, see here, Nan, I'd only need about 800 votes and I'm sure of almost 600 at the start—dead sure. Then if one out of every three of these 800 men got one other vote for me, I'd be nominated, don't you see?"

"You know best, Jamie," she said. "I don't. I just wanted to be sure. I would be so glad if you could win—oh, I'd be so proud of you."

She threw her arms around his neck, then tripped into the room where the bureau was and laid her hand upon the knob of the drawer that contained her precious letter.

A moment she hesitated. She did so want a parlor carpet—and a few dishes—and besides, if this money was used and Jim should lose—if he should—there was no telling—

Her glance wandered to the kitchen and she saw Jim leaning against the table, his chin resting in his hand.

"Jamie knows," she said to her heart; "dear old Jamie, he is so at times and so sure. He cannot be mistaken. And if he should win, how nicely we can get along."

A moment later she stood before him, smiling into his face, her hands behind her back.

"Kiss me, sir," she said, "and I'll give you something."

He lifted her chin with a big, rough hand and kissed her, awkwardly, and she handed him the letter.

As he read it, his eyes brightened and renewed courage crept into his face. But when he had finished he smiled and handed it back to her.

"But you are to keep the money," she said. "Keep it, Jamie and fight—fight—and win."

He shook his head. "I can't take your money, sweetheart," he said. "It ain't mine, and I—I wouldn't feel just right about it."

She looked her arms about his neck.

"But I want you to," she cried; "oh, I want you to win—win—win—then we'll buy a little home and it will be ours, Jamie, ours!"

A light, not unlike that on a warrior's face in the heat of battle, crept into his eyes.

"I will!" he cried. "God bless you, Nannie girl, I will!"

The last of the returns had been received and those who had been successful at the primaries, surrounded by their admiring friends, left the hall, until the big room was all but deserted.

But over in one corner, where the light shone dim and indistinct, a man lingered, as though loath to leave. His eyes, like those of one who looks, but sees not, stared straight ahead, and upon his face was a hard, resentful gleam.

The janitor, coming in to turn off the lights, saw him.

"Hello, Paxton," he said, "here's where you lose, ain't it?"

"Here's where I lose," Jim replied, grimly. "But I can't believe it, Bascom. I can't believe I'm defeated. The boys all promised to stick by me, and—and I was so sure."

"They are always sure," Bascom replied. "Can't tell nothin' about politics, Paxton; can't tell who your friends are either until after the votes are counted."

"But I came so near, Bascom; why, I lacked only 20 votes—and it meant so much to me. You see it was Nan's—"

He paused. Bascom had moved off indifferently and was putting out the lights at the further end of the room.

When Jim turned in at his door yard, he saw a shadow on the porch, which came lightly down the steps to meet him. It was Nan.

As the light from the window illuminated his face, Nan paused. There was no need for him to tell her the news. She read it in the curl gleam of his eyes, and

her heart sank within her. He tried to speak, but his lips refused to move.

"Never mind, Jamie dear," she said, bravely, seeing the misery greater than her own, in his face.

"But your money, Nannie," he cried, "it's—"

"I know it, dear," she said, and her words nearly choked her, "but you did the best you could, Jamie."

"Yes, I did, Nannie, I did," he said, "and Gregory only beat me by 20 votes. Oh, I was so sure, Nannie, so sure."

Nan put her arm through his and patted his hand as she would a child's, as they entered the house.

"Why is it," he asked, bitterly, "that a man like Gregory, who doesn't need it, is always elected, while fellows like me, who have hunted everywhere for something to do and have spent every cent we had, are beaten?"

Nan clasped her hands behind his neck.

"But we have each other, Jamie, boy," she said.

"Yes," he replied, with an effort at cheerfulness. "We have each other, Nannie, girl, and I'll work—I'll get something to do—and I'll pay it back, every cent of it, Nan, and we'll—"

A tramping of feet sounded upon the porch followed by a heavy knock upon the door. Jim opened it and half a dozen mill hands swarmed in.

Grasping Paxton by both hands, they swung him around and around and slapped him boisterously upon the back.

"You're elected, old man!" they cried. "There was a mistake in the Sixth ward, and you're it!"

Jim stood a moment silently looking at them.

"You say—I'm—elected?" he asked at last.

"That's right," said one. "There was a mistake of a hundred in the count, and you have 50 majority."

"You are—not fooling me—boys?" Jim asked, very slowly, the color coming and going in his face, his lips trembling.

"Sure not," they said. "It is the truth. You didn't think we'd go back on you, did you, Jim?"

Jim turned slightly and rested a rough hand tenderly upon the head of Nan who had sunk into a chair and had buried her face in her hands.

"I thank you, boys," he said, hoarsely; "I thank you more than you can ever know."

Not Appreciated.

"My heart is lost," the milkmaid sang. And the farmer said, "B'zoah, I reckon I wouldn't make folks weep 'Ef you'd aise lose yore voice."
—Cincinnati Enquirer.

Mosquito Bites Remedies.

Not only in America, but in Europe as well, have mosquitoes been exceptionally abundant this year. Ammonia, the remedy commonly used in this country, is condemned by a German physician, who says it does not prevent the effect of a bite from remaining several days. He recommends holding the place bitten for a few seconds, and repeating in hot steam, which, he says, promptly relieves the itching and pain. Another remedy superior to ammonia is alum dissolved in alcohol and rubbed in vigorously. To keep mosquitoes away at night, rub the face, neck and hands with lemon juice.

HELPFUL MICROBES.

BACTERIA THAT WORK IN THE FIELDS FOR FARMERS.

Furnished Free by the Department of Agriculture to Replenish the Exhausted Soil with Nitrogen.

Bacteria! The very word has an ominous sound. Every one instinctively wishes to keep away from bacteria as things of fear, says Youth's Companion. But there are good bacteria as well as bad ones—"benevolent" bacteria, that ask nothing better than to work on the farm, with no reward except that of their own virtue. Uncle Sam thinks so highly of this class of germs that since August, 1903, the department of agriculture has offered to send them, free, to the American farmer.

And if the farmer is wise, he will take as many of them as he can get, and set them to work in his fields as soon as possible.

These industrious and deserving microbes may be pretty well described by calling them "nitrogen-fixing bacteria," or in more cumbersome phrase, "bacteria of the root nodules of leguminous plants."

Any boy who lives on a farm soon learns that to restore the fertility of worn-out fields, clover or its cousins must be sown. Clover, peas, vetches, alfalfa are all good for this purpose. In the rotation of crops to keep land from being worn out, clover or its equivalent must come round every fourth year.

The farmer does not know why, but he knows the fact. The scientist knows why. It is because clover is a nitrogen-producing crop. Down on its roots are multitudes of tiny nodules, and in those nodules are bacteria which have the power to take in nitrogen somehow from the air, and give it to the soil. Then the corn and wheat crop take this nitrogen up and exhaust it, and the field must go to clover or its related crops again.

Almost one hundred million dollars' worth of nitrogen is exported from America yearly, it has been estimated, in the form of grain. The American farmer, besides his rotation of crops, has been forced to keep putting nitrogen back into the soil in expensive fertilizers. This seemed to a certain clever German scientist, rather a pity, as long as bacteria exist which like the job of nitrogenizing the ground. As man has harnessed steam and electricity, why not train germs to do the farming?

So for nearly ten years these bacteria have been under culture and experiment by Prof. Nubbe, Hartleb, and others in Germany, and lately by Prof. MacMillan and Burrell, in America. The Germans wished to develop a high growth of the germs on the roots of the leguminous plants in any soil. The Americans went further, experimenting upon wheat and corn, to see if a crop of grain could not be made to grow itself and its own fertilizer at the same time—surely a true Yankee idea.

The most practical discovery, however, is that of George T. Moore. By his

process every farmer can grow the nitrogen-fixing bacteria himself and apply them himself to his crop. He can send to the department of agriculture and get a small packet of sterilized cotton, on which the germs are growing. With this come two tiny packages of chemicals. One of these he dissolves in a certain amount of water, and crops in the cotton, germs and all, to soak overnight. The next morning he pours in the other chemical, and the germs develop until the water becomes cloudy with them.

This milky fluid is then poured over the seed of the leguminous crop the farmer wishes to plant, the seed is put into the ground, and the germs begin their career of taking in nitrogen. They will do it in land where it has never been possible to raise a good crop of clover or cowpeas before, and they will do it tenfold in ordinary fields. The experimenters hope that the bacteria will increase crops from five to fifty per cent, and do away with fertilizers.

If they can be cultivated on the roots of corn and wheat—and some of the experiments have been promising—the rotation of crops can be done away with, too, and grain-crops follow each other without cessation upon the poorest soils.

All this seems like a fairy-tale. But the fairy-tale of science often turns out to be sober truth. At any rate, the farmer who hitches his wagon to the star of progress is a wiser man than he who sneers at new ideas; and if bacteria can be made to pay off the mortgage, they ought to be welcomed eagerly all over the land.

Horrible Punishment.

In 1890 the last instance of boiling to death took place in Persia. The offender, guilty of stealing state revenues, was put into a large cauldron of cold water, which was slowly heated to the boiling point. His bones were distributed, as a warning, among the provincial tax collectors.

Rocks vs. Sand.

Edyth—I'm surprised to hear of your engagement to old Bullion. Was he the only man with sand enough to propose?

Mayme—Oh, no; but he was the only one with rocks enough to interest me.—Chicago Daily News.

How He Got In.

Church—Did your friend get into the Four Hundred?

Gotham—Well, he got into a few of them to the extent of several thousand dollars!—Yonkers Statesman.

Warranted.

Innocent—Is your antique bracelet authentic?

Parvenu—Oh, yes! It was taken from the arm of the Venus de Milo, I am told.—Detroit Free Press.

Hardly.

Somehow the girl is never as proud of the photograph taken at the seashore showing her sentimental pose with a stray summer man as that individual is when he exhibits it as evidence of how "crazy" she was over him.—Baltimore American.

Philosophic Poverty.

"Mike," said Plodding Pete, "would you do if you was rich?"

"Well," answered Meandering Mike, "I'd very likely be cofs' like a lot of other rich folks, an' be wonderin' whether any innocent bankers 'd gettin' short-changed on the strength of my signature."—Washington Star.

Secret Is Out.

Amateur Author—I wonder why editors always tell us to write on one side of the paper only.

Amateur Poet—Why, so that they can use the other side for writing their own silly articles and things on, of course, and so save paper.—All-Sloper.

Tongue Exercise.

A Russian young girl named Navajoksa, kaneczojvitch, who lived in the village of Golosjokco, kaajvitch.

Got tired of her name.

And to better the same.

She married a man named Zhakalych and a whole lot more of the -the- alphabet, vitch.

—Royal Magazine.

THE REASON WHY.



Professor—Est see my contention to make se great musician of your little boy, but he must practice more can he does.

Mrs. Blubbins—It's all 'is father's fault, professor. 'E gives 'im two-pence a day not to go anear the pianar.

The Unwilling Sock.

"Come out of the drawer, you worn-out old chap. There's a place ready waiting in grand-mamma's lap!"

Said the sock with the holes where the Cane light came through:

"Get in grand-mamma's lap? I'll be darned! If I do."

—N. O. Times-Democrat.

No Deal.

Tourist—I understand that you have relics of the war for sale, my friend?

"We did have," replied the boy, "but they have bought us out, an' the swords daddy buried last week won't get rusted 'fore summer."—Smith Weekly.