

THE WEAKEST LINK.

The gray light of a November moon filtered dully through the long windows of the city building...

There! he exclaimed at last, eyeing his craftsmanship with the tough wire. "That'll do, I guess, for the hook. Now for some string!"

He felt in his pockets, then dove into the waste basket and emerged with a short piece of twine, which he fastened to his hook...

Just then a clerk entered from the next room, where through the open door could be seen the faces of a number of men and some women.

"Having a good time, son?" "Pretty good," the boy replied with dignity. "Say, got any string around here?"

The clerk pointed to the recess where the office twine was kept, and with another smile left the room, closing the door carefully.

Then he made for the window, which after considerable exertion he managed to raise sufficiently to enable him to get his head through.

"Now!" he said, cautiously dropping his hook and line over the window sill. "Now we'll see what's coming to us!"

He played the line in and out skillfully, and jerked it to and fro as if he were making a long cast, all the time continuing his dramatic comment.

"There goes one! Now! Almost hooked him. There—the dub! Oh, gee!"

All that was left of the boy within the office was a pair of fat legs wiggling ecstatically in time with the dangling hook.

The older of the men, who was slight, with grizzled hair and stooping shoulders, took the chair behind the desk and motioned the others to seats.

"Please sit down," he said in a low voice. But neither the man nor the woman accepted the invitation.

"Dad! Where did you come from?" The man put out his hand, swung himself up on his father's shoulders...

"I have brought you here," he said, a little wearily, "so that we might talk this matter over to ourselves, quietly."

"Without the 'disturbing influence of counsel," he added. "It seems to me," the speaker resumed quickly, "that there is collusion in this case."

"I shall not grant your decree today. I shall hold it for six months—then you may both come back here with him—with him, remember!"

He crossed the room briskly and opened the door into the hall, holding it wide for the three to pass out.

With bewildered faces, husband and wife slowly left the Judge's chambers. The boy, still holding to a hand of each parent, skipped friskily between them.

"You're coming too, dad?" the boy said tentatively, still holding the man's hand in a tight grip.

"I cannot believe that a man of your appearance, of your established reputation, would be guilty of striking a woman—and that woman your wife—as she has just testified, unconcoerced."

"So it seems that you are not really willing to leave this wife of yours penniless—to desert her in the full sense of the word—as she sets up in her plea?"

The Judge turned sharply toward the man, who lowered his eyes. After a few moments of painful silence he resumed meditatively:

As he spoke his eyes traveled down the room until they fell upon the small boy who was still absorbed in his angling out of the window.

"But where children enter the case, I believe it is my duty to accept the subterfuge offered until I have convinced myself to the best of my ability that there is no other resort."

"In your case there is a child," the Judge said softly. "I had his mother bring him to my chambers in order that I might see his side of the case. A nice lad! He has not suffered—yet."

"Think," the Judge resumed, in his gently musing tone, "what this act of yours must mean to him—now and forever after throughout his life!"

"You had a home? Yes! Your father and mother may have quarreled—may have seen their mistake as plainly as you think you see yours."

"I'll get you a pipe, dad," the boy suggested hospitably. "I know where they are, in the attic."

"Can't you—the man—put yourself aside for him? Forget that other—possibility? For the sake of your son, forget yourself for a few years at least."

The woman's face paled. "Judge," the man interrupted huskily, "I—"

One moment, please! The Judge raised his hand. "Your life is half spent, but his is almost unspent. What, then, will you do for him?"

"I suggest in the first place—one of those places in the West—" "Nevada!" she exclaimed. "Out there away from my friends—in that sneaking fashion—never!"

"Here, dad!" The boy came running, breathless. "The big one you like best! And here's some tobacco I found, too!"

He gave his father the pipe and tobacco in a glow of joy at being able to satisfy the wants of this distinguished stranger.

"Suppose we all go South? I think I can get away. Business is pretty dull."

"Won't that be swell?" the boy remarked ecstatically. "No school—say! Oh, my!"

"I'll look after Ned." "Leave him—to you?" she flashed. "No, thanks!"

"Let's all go," the boy suggested. At the awkward pause which followed between the elders, he remarked, as if announcing a much meditated truth:

"I think families—he always had trouble with this word—families should keep together and stay in one place. Don't you, dad?"

"Well, you can bring another suit and sue what charges you wish," he suggested defiantly. "I'll show you up to the world! I'll—I'll—"

"I see," he said quietly, "that I made a mistake in coming here. It was for the boy's sake. He couldn't understand, and I didn't want to hurt his feelings."

She turned her head sharply, and with the light falling on her face he saw how pale she was, how worn in the heat of battle in the courtroom he had not noticed how ill she was looking.

"He hated emotion, he hated fuss. The Judge was an ass if he thought any man could live with this hysterical creature. His self-control was fast giving away under the heat of the storm."

"Louise," he said, standing still before her, "don't! It only makes it worse!" She looked at him out of hating eyes, but he opened it.

"He's a chatty little chap," the man muttered. "He'll miss you now more than ever," the woman said, collapsing into a chair.

"I don't believe that," the Judge said with a little smile. "So I say, Judge," the woman interposed again. "He must not do that. And there's no reason why he should—everything's ahead!"

"That's the only way—to begin all over." He turned to the boy, who had grown weary of his former fishing ground and had come to join the others.

"How's fishing, sonny?" he inquired. "That kind of fishing's no good," the boy said with the large disdain of real experience.

his father to get out. Then he took the man's hand again, as if he had been turning matters over and had determined that this elusive parent should not give him the slip.

The man, once within the door of his abandoned home, stood irresolute, but the boy, taking his hat and coat from him, hung them up in the empty closet.

"Father's home, Margaret! Set two more places! I'm going to sit up for dinner," he added with a tone of conscious dignity.

It was another of those dreary meals in this gloom, silent house, in which the gloom of human failure seemed to have settled with the chill of the tomb.

The man felt in his pocket for a cigar, then unconsciously got up and looked in the corner of the sideboard, where the cigar-box used to be kept.

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woman was crying softly. The boy, who had followed his father, looked from one to the other anxiously.

"You're going away?" he said. "I'll be back again. I'll see you soon, sonny," the man stammered.

"It was a long while the last time," the boy observed with a sign. "Why—"

"Then he paused, as if he realized the hopelessness of understanding these queer grown-ups. "My room isn't ready for me," the man said desperately.

"Then you can sleep with me!" the man hesitated, the boy gasped the suggestion more firmly. "There's lots of room. Goody! Goody!"

"Do you want me to go?" he asked in a low voice. "As you like," she murmured, turning away her miserable face.

"Well, for the night, then," the man muttered, rumping the boy's hair. At breakfast, some weeks after the return of the man, the boy's round, shiny face gleamed across the broad opposite his father.

"Dad, I don't think mother is well." "Why?" "Because she cries too much, and she stays in bed too much," he said firmly.

"Because she cries too much, and she stays in bed too much," he said firmly. "His tone was grave, as if the two men of the family must consult together in regard to the weaker member."

"Ned doesn't seem to think you are quite well," he remarked casually. "Why don't you go South and get a change? It might make you more fit."

"I expected to be out of this awful place before this, but now—"

"I'll look after Ned." "Leave him—to you?" she flashed. "No, thanks!"

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accidents of life merely presented to him delightful solutions. "In the country, where things grow you know!"

"Yes," the Judge agreed, patting his head; "boys and puppies—and other things."

He looked at the three for a moment. Then, as he signed the papers, he said to them:

"If you don't lose your nerve, the chain will hold." "It was plain enough now who was the weakest link."

And the three went out of the Judge's room together—By Robert Herrick—From the Public Ledger.

Popular Record by State Insurance Fund. During the twelve years of the existence of the State insurance fund, which was established January 1, 1916 by act of the general assembly...

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FARM NOTES. —Too often dry pastures, flies, and especially insufficient grain and water cause scrawny looking calves that never develop into average-size cows.

The calf should be eating some grain from the time it is three weeks old and at weaning time this should be slightly increased...

Indications point to a "fairly heavy" fruit crop, according to an announcement made by Federal State Crop Reporting Service at Harrisburg. Estimates in the State for July 1 indicate that 1928 crops of apples, pears, peaches and grapes will be greater than last year...

The forecast for the State's apple crop exceeds the 1927 harvest by more than 3,000,000 bushels, the bureau declares. Last year's apple crop in the State was 6,000,000 bushels, as compared with 9,000,000 bushels forecast for the present season.

The peach crop forecast is 78 per cent. over the 1927 harvest, although prospects range from total failure to heavy crops requiring trimming in various sections of the State for production is expected to double last year's crop...

The commercial crop in Pennsylvania is estimated at 1,148,000 barrels, an increase of 300,000 barrels over last year's production. A "fair crop, of clear, good sized fruit," is reported. Baldwin and York varieties appear to have an "off year," showing only 30 and 37 per cent. normal, respectively. Wealthies will produce 63 per cent. normal, it is expected.

During the past seven years stinking smut has risen from a place of almost no economic importance to that of being the most destructive disease of wheat. For the past three years the annual toll exacted from Pennsylvania farmers has averaged 1,000,000 bushels a year.

On the train thousands of bushels of wheat will be treated with copper carbonate dust, which controls stinking smut. The service will be principally for growers residing in sections inaccessible to commercial treating machines installed in mills.

Stops will be made in Lycoming, Union, Northumberland, Schuylkill, Berks, Lebanon, Dauphin, Cumberland, Franklin, Adams, Lancaster, Carbon, Northampton, Lehigh, Montgomery, Chester, Bucks, Philadelphia and Delaware counties in this State and in Mercer and Somerset counties, New Jersey.

Five men pay fines on blue law charges. Charged with violating the Sunday blue law of 1794, five persons connected with the 200-mile speed classic at Tipton Sunday were discharged at a hearing before Anthony O'Toole, alderman of Altoona, Monday afternoon...

Fourteen lives lost in State industries in the month of July. Pennsylvania's industries took a toll of 142 lives and caused injuries to 12,291 workers during July, according to reports made public by the bureau of statistics of the Department of Labor and Industry.

Detailed figures announced last night by the bureau showed that 50 less fatal and 212 less non-fatal accidents were reported during the month than in June.

The largest decrease was in the coal mining industry. Fatalities in the anthracite mines were 17 less than in June and in the bituminous, 20 less.

Fatalities in the construction, retail trading, hotel and restaurant groups showed an increase over the preceding month.

Cleanliness and proper feeding are absolutely essential in the successful raising of the dairy calf, says J. B. Shepherd, associate dairy husbandman of the United States Department of Agriculture, in Leaflet No. 20-L, "Care of the Dairy Calf," just issued by the department.

Many small disturbances of the calf's stomachic digestive system which hinder growth and development are caused by unclean pens, bedding, feed pails and feed. Proper care exercised in keeping the pens clean and well supplied with dry bedding, in washing and scalding the pails after each feeding, and in removing discarded feed from the feed boxes each day will aid materially in giving the calf a good start.

During the first two weeks the calf should have whole milk, preferably from its mother. Six to nine pounds of milk daily for the first week, divided equally into three feedings, is sufficient for the average-size calf.

This amount may be increased by three pounds a day during the second week if the calf is doing well. A few calves are raised on whole milk, but it is usually too valuable to feed. Calves do nearly as well on skim milk, and most calves are raised on this feed.

If fresh skim milk is not available, dried or powdered skim milk may be fed instead, or the calf may be raised on so-called calf-meal gruels. Although calf-meal gruels are not quite so satisfactory as skim milk, fairly good results will be obtained by proper feeding.

A good meal devised by the bureau of dairy industry and known as the Beltsville calf meal consists of 50 parts, by weight, of finely ground corn, 15 parts linseed meal, 15 parts finely ground rolled oats, 10 parts dry skim milk, and one-half part salt.

To prepare it for feeding, mix to a smooth consistency with an equal weight of cold water. Then add 8 pounds of warm or boiling water for each pound of dry calf meal used. Stir thoroughly until well mixed and allow to stand for several hours. Warm to 100 degrees Fahrenheit before feeding. Mix only enough at one time for one or two feedings.

The best results from feeding calf-meal gruel are obtained by substituting it very gradually for whole milk after the calf is four weeks old, taking at least four weeks to complete the change from milk to gruel.

Other factors essential to success in raising the dairy calf during the first six months of life are discussed in this leaflet, a copy of which may be produced by writing to the United States Department of Agriculture, Washington, D. C.