

In the Days of Poor Richard

CHAPTER XVII—Continued.
—18—

By IRVING BACHELLER
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Solomon took the lightning hurlers out of the packs and unwrapped them and tried the springs above the hammers. Earlier in the day he had looked to the priming. Solomon gave one to Jack and put the other two in his pockets. Each examined his pistols and adjusted them in his belt. They started for the low-lying ridge above the little valley of Rock creek. It was now quite dark and looking down through the thickets of hemlock they could see the freight of the Indians and hear the wash of the creek water. Suddenly a wild whooping among the red men, savage as the howl of wolves on the trail of a wounded bison, ran beyond them, far out into the forest, and sent its echoes traveling from hilltop to mountain side. Then came a sound which no man may hear without getting, as Solomon was wont to say, "a scar on his soul which he will carry beyond the last cape." It was the death cry of a captive. Solomon had heard it before. He knew what it meant. The fire was taking hold and the smoke had begun to smother him. Those cries were like the stabbing of a knife and the recollection of them like blood stains.

They hurried down the slant, brushing through the thicket, the sound of their approach being covered by the appalling cries of the victim and the demon-like tumult of the drunken braves. The two scouts were racked with soul pain as they went on so that they could scarcely hold their peace and keep their feet from running. A new sense of the capacity for evil in the heart of man entered the mind of Jack. They had come close to the frightful scene, when suddenly a deep silence fell upon it. Thank God, the victim had gone beyond the reach of pain. Something had happened in his passing—perhaps the savages had thought it a sign from heaven. For a moment their clamor had ceased. The two scouts could plainly see the poor man behind a red veil of flame. Suddenly the white leader of the raiders approached the pyre, limping on his wooden stump, with a stick in his hand, and prodded the face of the victim. It was his last act. Solomon was taking aim. His rifle spoke. Red Snout tumbled forward into the fire. Then what a scurry among the Indians! They vanished and so suddenly that Jack wondered where they had gone. Solomon stood reloading the rifle barrel he had just emptied. Then he said:

"They's an awful mess in thar. I don't keer to see it," said Solomon. Near them they discovered a warrior who had crawled out of that death chamber in the rocks. He had been stunned and wounded about the shoulders. They helped him to his feet and led him away. He was trembling with fear. Solomon found a pine torch, still burning, near where the fire had been. By its light they dressed his wounds—the old scout having with him always a small surgeon's outfit.

"Whar is t' other captive?" he asked in the Indian tongue. "About a mile down the trail. It's a woman and a boy," said the warrior. "Take us whar they be," Solomon commanded.

The three started slowly down the trail, the warrior leading them.

CHAPTER XVIII

The Voice of a Woman Sobbing. Over the ridge and more than a mile away was a wet, wild meadow. They found the cow and horses feeding on its edge near the trail. The moon, clouded since dark, had come out in the clear mid-heavens and thrown its light into the high windows of the forest above the ancient thoroughfare of the Indian. The red guide of the two scouts gave a call which was quickly answered. A few rods farther on, they saw a pair of old Indians sitting in blankets near a thicket of black timber. They could hear the voice of a woman sobbing near where they stood.

"Womern, don't be skeered o' us—we're friends—we're goin' to take ye hum," said Solomon.

The woman came out of the thicket



with a little lad of four asleep in her arms. "Where do ye live?" Solomon asked. "Far south on the shore o' the Mohawk," she answered in a voice trembling with emotion.

"What's yer name?" "I'm Bill Scott's wife," she answered.

"Cat's blood and gunpowder!" Solomon exclaimed. "I'm Sol Binkus."

She knelt before the old scout and kissed his knees and could not speak for the fullness of her heart. Solomon bent over and took the sleeping lad from her arms and held him against his breast.

"Don't feel bad. We're a-goin' to take keer o' you," said Solomon. "Ayes, sir, we be! They ain't nobody goin' to harm ye—nobody at all."

There was a note of tenderness in the voice of the man as he felt the chin of the little lad with his big thumb and finger.

"Do ye know what they done with Bill?" the woman asked soon in a pleading voice.

The scout swallowed as his brain began to work on the problem in hand. "Bill broke loose an' got away. He's gone," Solomon answered in a sad voice.

"Did they torture him?" "What they done I couldn't jes' tell ye. But they kin't do no more to him. He's gone."

She seemed to sense his meaning and lay crouched upon the ground with her sorrow until Solomon lifted her to her feet and said:

"Look here, little womern, this don't do no good. I'm goin' to spread my blanket under the pines an' I want ye to lay down with yer boy an' git some sleep. We got a long trip tomorrer."

"Tain't so bad as it might be—ye're kind o' lucky a'ter all is said an' done," he remarked as he covered the woman and the child.

The wounded warrior and the old men were not to be found. They had sneaked away into the bush. Jack and Solomon looked about and the latter called but got no answer.

"They're skeered o' ar down to the toe nails," said Solomon. "They couldn't stan' it here. A lightning' thrower is a few too many. They'd ruther be nigh a rattlesnake."

The scouts had no sleep that night. They sat down by the trail side leaning against a log and lighted their pipes.

"You member Bill Scott?" Solomon whispered.

"Yes. We spent a night in his house."

"He were a mean cuss. Sold rum to the Injuns. I allus tol' him it were wrong but—my God A'mighty!—I never 'spected that the fire in the water were a goin' to burn him up sometime. No, sir—I never dreamed he were a-goin' to be punished so—never."

They lay back against the log with their one blanket spread and spent the night in a kind of half sleep.

Every little sound was "like a kick in the ribs," as Solomon put it, and drove them "into the look and listen business." The woman was often crying out or the cow and horses getting up to feed.

"My son, go to sleep," said Solomon. "I tell ye there ain't no danger now—not a bit. I don't know much but I know Injuns—plenty."

In spite of his knowledge even Solomon himself could not sleep. A little before daylight they arose and began to stir about.

"I was badly burnt by that fire," Jack whispered.

"Inside!" Solomon answered. "So was I. My soul were a-sweatin' all night."

The morning was chilly. They gathered birch bark and dry pine and soon had a fire going. Solomon stole over to the thicket where the woman and child were lying and returned in a moment.

"They're sound asleep," he said in a low tone. "We'll let 'em alone."

He began to make tea and got out the last of their bread and dried meat and bacon. He was frying the latter when he said:

"That 'ere is a mighty likely womern."

He turned the bacon with his fork and added:

"Turrible party when she were young. Allus hated the rum business."

Jack went out on the wild meadow and brought in the cow and milked her, filling a basin and a quart bottle.

Solomon went to the thicket and called:

"Mis' Scott!" The woman answered.

"Here's a tow'l an' a little jug o' soap, Mis' Scott. Ye kin take the boy to the creek an' git washed an' then come to the fire an' eat yer breakfast."

The boy was a handsome, blond lad with blue eyes and a serious manner. His confidence in the protection of his mother was sublime.

"What's yer name?" Solomon asked, looking up at the lad whom he had lifted high in the air.

"Whig Scott," the boy answered timidly with tears in his eyes.

"What! Be ye skeered o' me?" These words came from the little lad as he began to cry: "No, sir. I ain't skeered. I'm a brave man."

"Courage is the first virtue in which the young are schooled on the frontier," Jack wrote in a letter to his friends at home in which he told of the history of that day. "The words and manner of the boy reminded me of my own childhood."

"Solomon held Whig in his lap and fed him and soon won his confidence. The backs of the horses and the cow were so badly galled they could not be ridden, but we were able to lash the packs over a blanket on one of the horses. We droye the beasts ahead of the men. The Indians had timbered the swales here and there so that we were able to pass them with little trouble. Over the worst places I had the boy on my back while Solomon carried 'Mis' Scott' in his arms as if she were a baby. He was very gentle with her. To him, as you know, a woman has been a sacred creature since his wife died. He seemed to regard the boy as a wonderful kind of plaything. At the camping places he spent every moment of his leisure tossing him in the air or rolling on the ground with him."

"One day when the woman sat by the fire crying, the little lad touched her brow with his hand and said:

"Don't be skeered, mother. I'm brave. I'll take keer o' you."

"Solomon came to where I was breaking some dry sticks for the fire and said laughingly, as he wiped a tear from his cheek with the back of his great right hand:

"Did ye ever see such a gol' durn cunnin' leetle cricket in yer born days—ever?"

"Always thereafter he referred to the boy as the Little Cricket."

Jack wrote in another of his letters that as they fared along, down toward the sown lands of the upper Mohawk, Solomon began to develop talents of which none of his friends had entertained the least suspicion.

"He has had a hard life full of fight and peril like most of us who were born in this New World," the young man wrote. "He reminds me of some of the Old Testament heroes, and is not this land we have traversed like the plains of Mamre? What a gentle creature he might have been if he had had a chance! How long, I wonder, must we be slayers of men? As long, I take it, as there are savages against whom we must defend ourselves."

The next morning they met a company of one of the regiments of General Herkimer who had gone in pursuit of Red Snout and his followers. Learning what had happened to that evil band and its leader the soldiers fared about and escorted Solomon and his party to Oriskany.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Caution is the parent of safety.

Something to Think About

By F. A. WALKER

WHEN WINDS ARE FAIR

IN THE summer time of life, when the winds are fair, very few of us are disposed to think about anything except pleasure.

It is our turn upon the stage. We are anxious to play our part with magnificent gusto, though we may be as green as a pair of rustic bumpkins in the art of dancing the stately minuet.

But the minuet, alas, is too beautiful, airy, dainty and graceful for the present summer-time folk.

There is too much exquisite charm in its movements and not enough noise. Yet so it is.

If we would acknowledge it, we might without the slightest blush admit that this is the age of jazz and brass, and the two according to our way of thinking, jangle ravishingly together, especially when we furnish the brass, of which we have large varieties.

In spite of our supposedly higher education, we are deficient in many of the finer social arts with which our forebears of 20 or 40 years ago were intimately acquainted.

They were more esthetic than we, more particular with whom they formed social alliances; money and brass, even though they might have been well introduced, could not in those days enter the homes of the best people and get a cordial reception.

Pedigree and character took the long count, and around these two essential qualities the clock of propriety had to tick perfectly accurate seconds.

But in these days the winds seem to be fair for everybody, quite regardless of the barometer.

Even young men and young women attractive of face and form, with nothing to substantiate their character but brass and wealth, cannot enter in real society or become intimate with the cultured people.

And if you will stroll through these little towns you will become conscious of a delicious sweetness in the air.

which at first cannot be measured or understood.

It permeates the homes, the hills, the prim flower gardens, the shaded porches, and gives to life a nobility that neither wealth nor brass can ever hope to acquire.

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The Young Lady Across the Way



The young lady across the way says she weighs 110 pounds in her street clothes and 105 ad valorem.

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YOU THINK YOU'LL QUIT?

By DOUGLAS MALLOCH

YOU think you'll quit. You do not like

The way they speak to people there. You hope another job to strike. Where ev'ryone is always fair.

Of course, the hours are rather short. The labor, too, is rather light; And yet you'd like another sort, A place that's just exactly right.

That other job you had before 'Was not so bad, nor near as bad As once it seemed. What was made you sore

Was all the business that they had They paid you more than others would But often made you work at night; And so you left the place for good To look for one exactly right.

You have another move in mind; Another job you want to get, A place of quite another kind From any you have had as yet, With not so very much to do, Good pay, short hours, and lots of light.

And where they're always nice to you A place that's just exactly right.

And yet, my boy, my girl, my man, From job to job we often go, Yet seldom find, and seldom can, These Paradies here below.

There's very often something wrong, I guess, with ev'ry job in sight; Perhaps we'll have to get along With one that's not exactly right.

Perhaps the house has troubles, too, The chief has worries, too, no doubt. Perhaps there's something wrong with you

And me we never thought about. We're not entirely perfect, no, To customers perhaps polite; They keep us on the pay roll, though, Although we're not exactly right.

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SCHOOL DAYS



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Through the Glad Eyes of a Woman

By Jane Doe

"LAST HUMAN FRAILTY"

"I OFTEN think," said a New England minister, "that the last human frailty which Christian religion will succeed in conquering will be the tendency to gossip."

Well, you know, for myself, I rather hope it will be.

I am a great believer in gossip. Of course, I can quite understand the minister's feeling rather badly about it, because it seems that one of his dearly beloved congregation has circulated the false rumor that the reverend gentleman's good lady was a servant before her marriage.

"In the ordinary way, in view of its grave possibilities of evil, gossip should be altogether ignored, but now and then there are specimens of the more harmless variety that are so refreshingly humorous as to call for notice."

This also the minister. I don't lay any claims to humor myself, which perhaps explains why I can't see the "refreshingly funny" point about having your wife mistaken for an ex-servant.

I know one or two domestics who could make darn good ministeresses. And lots of ministeresses whom I can't think would be good for anything.

I agree with the gentleman, however, that a considerable amount of catty, dangerous, and ill-considered gossip should be ignored.

But I don't want any of us to lose our delight in or taste for it.

A wholesome fear of our neighbors'

gossiping tongues has kept not a few of us to the stricter paths of rectitude.

Where would we be, I wonder, if it were not for this dread of being "talked about," this natural sensitiveness to the words of scorn and ridicule?

I don't want to be rude, but you know as well as I do that some of us would be—wallowing in the mud.

No one can stop another from gossiping, but it is everyone's duty to shut up any man or woman who makes a foul remark or inference about an absent party, whether true or not.

But we shall always gossip. And we shall always love to, for the very simple reason that we are all units of this world's big family, and there isn't, after all, anything more vitally interesting than any incident,

however trifling, connected with that big family.

Which is why newspapers are the most popular forms of literature. They are simply gossip sheets—records of the doings of every one who does or says something worth gossiping about.

But be kind. Never say anything behind anyone else's back that you would not like said behind your own.

My, how easy it is to write this! I dare say if I could have a shorthand report of all the unkind things I've said about other folk during my little lifetime I'd commit suicide.

And similarly, if I could have a shorthand report of all the unkind things said about me I'd commit—murder.

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Mother's Cook Book

War is a terrible menace to the world, but folly, weakness and decay are worse.

WARM WEATHER FOODS

GELATIN desserts, frozen dishes and fruit of all kinds make an especial appeal to the appetite during the hot, sultry days of late summer.

A dessert is not a dish to worry about with ice cream to be bought in all markets and fresh fruits so available.

Ments in large quantity or at every meal are not desired by the average appetite during the warm weather; eggs, fish, fresh vegetables, fruits and plenty of milk will keep the body in good condition—with very little meat.

Fried eggs should never be given to anyone who has not a good digestion. So-called soft-cooked eggs are often boiled. An egg to be perfectly easy

of digestion should never be cooked at the boiling point. Simmering temperature cooks eggs well; the yolk will be neatly, the white tender. If four eggs in the shell are to be cooked take a dish holding a little more than four pints; into four pints of boiling water drop the four eggs. Cover closely, set aside and keep covered for 30 minutes if a well-cooked egg is wanted. If a soft or coddled egg, remove in ten minutes.

It is easy to cook new potatoes in their jackets and we may feel we are justified when we know we are saving valuable minerals which are lost if the potatoes are peeled and boiled.

The following is a good warm-weather dish taking the place of meat:

Rinkumtdmity of Cheese. Peel and chop very fine enough white onions to measure a cupful; they should be chopped as fine as pulp,

Cook them in a pan with enough butter to brown a golden color. Add one and one-half pounds of thinly sliced rich American cheese, one teaspoonful of salt, two of dry mustard, two tablespoonfuls of worcestershire and one-eighth of a teaspoonful of cayenne. Have ready one cupful of sifted tomatoes, add gradually while stirring until the cheese is melted. Add quickly two beaten eggs; stir these until barely set and serve on slices of buttered toast arranged on a large platter. Garnish with shredded cabbage or lettuce cut into strips.

Add a little gelatin to ginger ale and mold for dessert. One may make any number of delicious combinations adding bits of orange or other fruits. Serve with cream and sugar.

Nellie Maxwell

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Makes Tea Automatically

A tea-maker that will light a spirit lamp at a time set as for an alarm clock, and later put the tea and boiling water into the teapot, is a popular invention of an English army officer.