

Vest Pocket Essays

By **GEORGE FITCH**
Author of "At Good-Old Siwash"

THE OPTIMIST.

An optimist is a man who would celebrate the anniversary of the day on which his leg was broken, because the automobile didn't spoil his clothes when it ran over him.

The optimist sees only the bright side of things. Every dark cloud to him has a silver lining and is perpetually inside out. There is no such thing as misfortune to the optimist. He has torn the misfortune page out of his lexicon, and has used it for a cigar lighter. If he is poor, he is glad because he will enjoy so much more being rich week after next. If he is sick, it is a most auspicious occasion because he is indoors with liver complaint, instead of outdoors catching pneumonia. If he has lost his job, it will enable him to enjoy a nice vacation. If he is starving, he remembers how uncomfortable fat people are, and smiles. If the home team is seven runs behind in the eighth inning, does he leave the park in disgust? No, indeed. Something is bound to turn up in the ninth, so he bets another dollar and stays on.

In fact, betting, gold mining, and stock selling would hardly be paying games if it were not for the optimist. He will bet on a three-legged horse, because for all he knows it may grow another leg on the back stretch. He will buy \$1,000 worth of stock in a hole in the ground with traces of brass filings in it and will pay assessments for forty years, greasing up his wheelbarrow every month in order to be ready when the dividend

is declared. He will buy a block of stock in a perpetual motion company and will hold onto it even after some other sucker has offered to cart it away for him free of charge.

Thus optimism is profitable, but not always to the optimist. However,



The optimist sees only the bright side of things.

Life is very beautiful to him, and he is always happy. Once an optimist was lynched for horse stealing out west, and just before they kicked the barrel out from under him, he was asked if he had any last words. Looking over towards the mountains he murmured: "You couldn't have picked out a spot with a nicer view."

aged to get Norma alone to himself. "Norma," he said, "there is something I must tell you before we part." She slipped from his caress and moved away with tantalizing swiftness and grace.

"Don't spoil it all!" she responded. "Wait till we meet again."

"But when?" he remonstrated. "Very soon—I promise it. Then you shall tell me all your troubles."

"Troubles! You mean the cause of my alternate delirious hopes and blackest despair!"

"Listen—they are coming. They will be here in a few moments. Ruth Glidden has invited me to spend a week at Oakhurst. You know her brother Percy well. I will so arrange it that you, too, shall be there during my stay. Is not that enough to sustain your hopes and banish your despair, my loyal and trusted cavalier?"

And then she flitted away, a dazzling sprite, and Leslie felt as though the rarest gifts of the gods were his of a verity. Oh! he was sure he had found unending happiness and he was still more certain of it when Percy Glidden met him one day and said to him:

"This next week of yours belongs to my sister Ruth and Norma Waldron. Of course we can count on you," and Leslie flushed slightly at the sure intimation that his friend was aware

of his attachment for Norma. "You see, Norma is so used to excitement and variety and lots of company that it would be pretty dull for her down at Oakhurst. My sister is the dearest, loveliest being in the world, but her quiet ways are in very strong contrast to the flashing, dashing methods of our charming Norma."

The thought of meeting Norma and of having her all to himself greatly relieved Leslie. During that intervening week, however, he had been a good deal disturbed with rumors that his capricious ladylove was acting the flirt and coquette. There was a flashy stranger who was said to be paying her unusual attention.

Leslie knew Percy Glidden well, his sister Ruth only slightly. When he reached Oakhurst and was driven along its quiet streets, it seemed good to him to experience a certain restful calm after the arduous social activity that had become continuous and wearisome. Somehow the old-fashioned home of the Gliddens presented a haven of restfulness. There was a severe disappointment at the start, however.

"Sorry, Leslie," Percy Glidden told him, "but Norma is not coming until next week—some important engagements is her plea. Do you think you can stand seven lonely days of our dull routine?"

"Give me a hammock and a book and I'll be the very peaceablest being in the world, Percy," declared Leslie. "A grand old place it was, indeed,

and within twenty-four hours it seemed as though a salutary spell was cast over the volatile spirits of the guest. He had always known that Ruth, with her quiet ways, was a strong contrast to Norma, but now, as those quiet ways accorded with the sweet, soothing peacefulness of her environment, Leslie began to take an interest in her that absorbed him. Gracious, gentle, almost queenly in her quiet, girlish dignity, when he was not in her presence a strange new influence seemed to have come into his existence.

What was it—new surroundings, the fever of excitement subdued by calm and wholesome environment, or was it an uprising of genuine love quenching the fitful flash of fancy? Leslie seemed to have entered upon a new life. The house, its occupants, all nature appeared in harmony complete with rational enjoyment, and Leslie was sorry when that week neared its end.

He was uneasy. He was almost tempted to leave Oakhurst, not caring to again meet the old idol of his dreams. Then, opening a newspaper that had just come by mail, he read an account of the elopement of Norma Waldron with the man who had once aroused his jealousy.

His spirits were rapt and joyous as he realized the news. He was free—if he had ever been otherwise—from to woo and win the woman whose loss would have shadowed all his life.

No Person Has Seen the Sun.

Astronomers aver that no one has ever seen the sun. A series of concentric shells envelops a nucleus of which we apparently know nothing except that it must be almost infinitely hotter than the fiercest furnace, and that it must amount to more than nine-tenths of the solar mass. That nucleus is the real sun, forever hidden from us. The outermost of the enveloping shell is about 5,000 miles thick, and is called the "chromosphere."

Thinking of Strenuous Days.

Barber (carried away by his reminiscences)—"And when he'd looped the loop he did a nose dive that fairly took your breath away."—Boston Evening Transcript.

Pope's Poetry.

His poetry is not a mountain-tarn like that of Wordsworth; it is not in sympathy with the higher moods of the mind; yet it continues entertaining in spite of all changes of mode. It was a mirror in a drawing-room, but it gave back a faithful image of society, powdered and rouged, to be sure, and intent on tridles, yet still as human in its way as the heroes of Homer in theirs.—Lowell.

Ordering One's Life.

Take time to scrutinize your life. Try to define just why you are "run" and decide for yourself that if you are going to be ruled, as most of us are, it must be by something or somebody well worth the arduous sprinting we are all indulging in. If the goal toward which we are being steered is worth while, only then can we look back and feel that the race has been well run.

Invisible Airplane Wings.

Wings of cellulose acetate, being transparent, make an airplane invisible at the height of a few thousand feet, also increasing the operator's field of vision. Sheets one one-hundredth-inch thick are about as strong as the ordinary wing cover, and the weight of nine ounces to the square yard is but slightly greater. The rapid spread of a tear when started is a disadvantage that may be overcome with a re-enforcing of loosely woven silk.

Be Slow to Condemn.

Why condemn an individual or institution before you hear both sides? Does a jury convict or a judge sentence a prisoner before the evidence is heard?

Her Quiet Ways

By VICTOR REDCLIFFE

(Copyright, 1919, by Western Newspaper Union.)

He never forgot the few lively, almost riotous weeks that followed his graduation. Leslie Warren had won the best college prizes. His father was more than ready to start him in business in a good way. And there was Norma Waldron!

Succeeding the period of vacation and festivity awarded by his student friends, there had come a week spent at Hazelwood, the palatial country home of the Waldrons. About a selected dozen were invited. Norma and her closest college girl friends were the hostesses and from the start Leslie had been attracted by Norma, and at the finish it was pretty generally believed that there would be a match.

Norma was a veritable madcap. It never occurred to Leslie that his staid, eminently, conservative parents would never receive as prospective daughter-in-law a romp, a mere butterfly of flashiness, folly and mischief. The practical phase of marriage he had never paused to consider. It was the last evening of his visit when he man-



THE TANGLED DOTS.
By Clifford Leon Sherman.

"I am going to paint my dot picture," said Phyllis, who was very proud of her new talent. But when she had finished there was a mighty uproar because all the children insisted that it might be a fish if it hadn't been for the

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