

TIM'S INITIATIVE

By WILLIAM A. CHAMBERLAIN

DON'T think we shall need you after to-night, Timothy.

The blow had fallen at last. Tim had been expecting it for weeks.

His lawyers were so sharp and skilful; their errands full of strange things, hard to remember, and dispatched to strange places, hard to find.

When he was left alone in the office and other lawyers came in, all of them sharp, like his employers, he was confused by their words.

Now he blundered at the telephone. He always failed to say the right thing to the collector.

Well, it's too bad, Timmie, losing your very first place, but I suppose you'll look around for another one.

"Oh, yes," replied Tim, choking up with sympathy. But when he went to his room and looked out of the window it really did not seem any use.

It was a sad story to tell to his mother; though, of course, being his mother, she would be easier than any other.

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Sometimes the faces of the women looked sideways from their desks at the candidate for Harry's or Harry's position, from his courage and pluck.

"Where's Dineen's wagon? He isn't peddling this year," said Nelly.

"Oh, I forgot that. But that's all—old and kinder."

"You're too—too bashful to live, Timmie Tighe. You just want somebody to plant you in a chair, and put a pen in your hand, and tell you what to write, and you'll write it. But they never will; and you'll go to the bad, if you don't look out. That's what you'll do."

"Oh, no, I won't do that, Nelly."

"Besides—the idea of the peddler's wagon haunted Tim strangely—"I'd have to have a license, anyway."

"Where'd I get the money?"

"Your mother has some. She could set you up. You could get a license easily enough, and a wagon, too, and a horse, and stock, and everything, if you weren't such a—great big baby."

Now Nelly was as brisk a girl as ever swung a broom, which was just her occupation this evening.

With these qualities she made an excellent housekeeper for her father, and though barely an assumed equality, she was the place of the mother who was gone.

Tim's first investment was a stock of blueberries. Columbus, journeying westward, in momentary peril of falling over the world; Nansen, pushing north, nearer and nearer to the pole, but farther and farther from kin and succor—neither of these heroes could have felt more venturesome than Tim Tighe, driving his newly-painted wagon through strange city streets,

and to send into the cold care of residents and passing pedestrians that loud clamor of his:

"Blueberries—all ripe—three quarts for a quarter!"

The first time he shouted the sound of his own voice startled him; he seemed to hear the words thrown back in derision.

"Yearly are—blueberries—all ripe!" that Tim felt ashamed of his timidity.

He resolved to experiment in a quiet quarter of the city. For fully a month their cries were unheeded; but at last a neat old lady called Tim to her doorstep, inspected his berries, and ordered three quarts.

That three-quarter order was the making of a man. Tim did not sweep the berries off level with the top of his measure. Far from it! They rose in a great mound from the middle of the box, and when he turned them into the lady's brown earthenware dish they actually spilled over the sides.

He counted out the change in his left hand with a new feeling of importance; and the very horse started with excitement when he tossed the measure back into the wagon and sang out boldly, with florid variations of his tune:

"Nice ripe blueberries year—three quarts for a quarter!"

At dusk one great box of berries was empty and another well hollowed in the middle; Willy was hoarse, and Tim, who did the walking, was tired, but his pockets were heavy with silver, which he jingled for Nelly's satisfaction—she happened to be at the gate again—and counted out on the table for his delighted mother.

Next evening the return was larger. Gradually customers began to watch for him and he for them. His cry was a warning signal which in quiet quarters could be heard a block away.

"Where did you get it?"

"His mother bought it," said Willy. "Did she? Aw, you can't jolly us!"

"I ain't trying to."

"Ge! You've got the cheek!"

A week before Tim would have wilted at this contempt. Now, his views had changed; he knew it was a compliment. It was their way of saying he was enterprising.

The period of his awakening was vacation time, one year ago. This summer Tim's stock included all kinds of fruits and vegetables in their season.

If you should see him, reaching over the tailboard to fill a peek-measure with tomatoes, you would hardly recognize the desolate saunterer who used to stop so often at the store windows.

Watching him expand the "orbic flex" of his mouth to emit the full fortissimo of his splendid lungs, you would not believe that he could ever say, "I saw your advertisement for a b-boy," in such a half-audible whisper that the employer quite mechanically doubled the volume of his stentorian "What?"

His whole air is fearless and prosperous. The very horse realizes a change. The mere way in which Tim shouts, "Get up!" or snuggles down a loose end of the blanket, or pulls Dobbin's ears under the strap of the feed-bag, or hops up on the seat and stands there, shaking the reins, his eyes alert in all directions for a customer, stamps him as an independent proprietor.

To be sure, all he owns is a peddler's wagon; but it is well pointed, not lopsided like some, and as tidy on top as any fruiterer's stall. And though Tim gives good measure, and knows that it "pays," he has learned that such wasteful generosity as that with which he heaped the measure for his first sale depresses his bank account.

The other day he met Mr. Dodd, the lawyer, on the street, and the two had a chat of several minutes, at the end of which Tim politely but firmly dismissed his old employer in order to serve a customer.

Of course there's nothing he would not do for Nelly Gray. Their good understanding continues. In fact, they meet every morning and evening. But Nelly has grown singularly shy lately. If anything happens between them, it will have to be Tim who takes the initiative.—Youth's Companion.

Dodging of the Duke of York. The duke of York was walking along Piccadilly the other day with Hon. Derek Keppel. He was not generally recognized, and remained for some seconds in the little throng which always collects at the crossing to St. James street. At last he made a dash for the shelter. Soon afterward the constable on duty stopped the traffic for the pedestrians to cross over the street. The duke, however, was still left standing on the shelter, much to the discomfort of two young men in a hansom cab, who immediately recognized the prince, but the constable declined to let their cabman pass on. At length the duke of York made another dash and ran round the horse's head, and at length landed safely on the other side, by which time he had been recognized all round.—St. James Gazette.

Girls in English Public Houses. In England there are 70,000 girls engaged in public houses and drinking bars.

HOUSEHOLD HELPS.

Old Bits of Information for the Housewife.

Not so many years ago it was the exception to the general rule when a housekeeper "set her sponge" in the morning instead of at night.

A question often on the lips of beginners in the art of bread making is: "Why do you put potatoes in bread sponge?" and any answer aside from "to keep the bread moist longer" is usually a poser to even an experienced cook.

Among all the plenitude of picturesque or comfortable pillows and cushions, none perhaps fulfills its modest mission better than the little cushions used at the hospitals for tucking under the patient tired and "achy" from lying in one position.

An excellent way to cook fresh haddock or cod is in tomato sauce. Cut a pound of the fish in slices, salt, pepper and flour well and put in an earthen dish with a small slice of onion. Cover with strained tomato and cook slowly from one-half to one hour in the oven off top of stove.

It will be found an excellent plan to have a groove at the back of the pantry shelves so that platters and large plates may stand up thus economizing space.—Washington Star.

Iowa women have secured, after a hard fight, a favorable committee report on a resolution for a constitutional amendment striking the word "male" from the suffrage clause.

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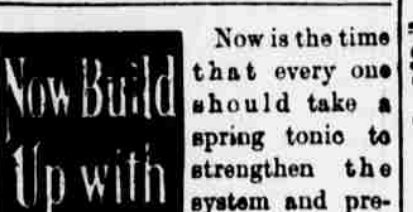
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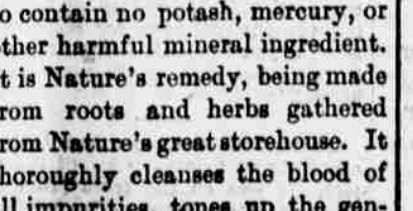
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