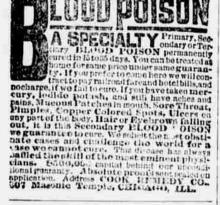


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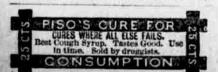
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Thirty Pieces of Silver

The Night Adventure in the Highway By Louise Betts Edwards

WO travelers in sober apparel, and riding sleek, well-fed nags, were the only wayfarers on the road, as far as the eye could reach. Without them, the weird loneliness of the November landscape would have missed its last touch of desolation; for the dripping, gray-green sedges, intersected with sulky little streams, and ditches, which looked like faded grogram ribbons with frayed edges, the sodden road with its deep ruts forming brownish-gray pools, and the leaden-gray sky, against which the leafless branches of the one pollard willow were extended-as though imploring respite from further rain-all blended themselves into a somber background that was wholly harmonious.

Only as the two horses, heavy with mud, laboriously climbed the steep, slippery hill, did the entrance of human beings bring the element of unrest into the scene.

"You climb cautiously, sir," observed the younger to the elder man, with a slight smile. Their difference in age could be but that of a year or two.

The older traveler, a clean-shaven, firm-jawed man, of unmistakably Scotch physiognomy, replied calmly: "I am afraid."

The other-his name was Fitzroysuddenly reined in his horse. His companion answered the amazed question

"Of falling-have a care, sir, or you will do it yourself. The mud is slippery; my horse carries a heavy load, and I have no mind for riding into town with torn cloak or bespattered person."

"You are wise, sir," said Fitzroy. The merciful man is merciful to his beast, his person and his garments. It hath been long years since I valued any of these, and, therefore, as you perceive," noticing the other man's scrutiy, "I have had many a fall in the mire."

"Tut! As to that, we are both miry. Tis these pestiferous roads after the rains. The stable-boys at the Golden Goblet shall scrape off some of it, when we have dined."

Again Fitzroy's horse reared back sharply, and again amazement stared from his eyes. "The Golden Goblet? You are bound to dine there? Then our ways part, sir; though I am loth to leave pleasant company."

"But how now?" in astonishment equally blank. "Where else should we dine, save at the inn? Pardon me, sir; but your behavior is certainly most strange.

A dull red had risen in Fitzroy's cheeks. He gazed at the ground without answer.

"If 'tis a matter of money-" began the other, in an altered tone. "Av. sir: you have touched the point.

Poverty is not a vice, is it? or it could not so readily shame us. My pockets are empty, and I have counted on the charity of some good cottage creature for a cup of milk and some bread and cheese.'

"Pray be my guest at the inn," said the other man, with formal civility. He was apparently as cautious of overdemonstration toward a chance acquaintance as of climbing slippery hills. but waxed more insistent at Fitzroy's violent demur: "But wherefore not?

"Sir, you are most kind. But I would go with an empty stomach rather than dine at the Golden Goblet. I have an ancient grudge-"

"But I thought," cried his fellowtraveler, "you were strange in these parts? You said as much when we fell in with each other this morning, and you prayed me to point you the road to Durham."

"But doth a road run one way only?" Fitzroy asked, a sudden sparkle of mirth in his eyes, as quickly extinguished. "As I remember the Golden Goblet, it stands at a crossing, and some approach it from the east, some from the west. Nay, sir-I have not yet learned your name. I cannot and will not enter that inn, and it is spending breath to ask me wherefore. Perchance the landlord hath cheated me-or I have cheated the landlord; perchance I happened to kiss the barmaid. Sir, I am sorry, but I will not go. I see a cottage in the distance; I am confident the good dame there will give us food, and even a night's lodging."

"Why, how know you that there is a dame, and that her hospitality is so free?"

"I do not know," said Fitzroy, with a slight contraction of the brows. "I can clearly see, however, you fear to trust yourself in the company of a man who ncknowledges himself penniless, even though"-with a faintly contemptuous glance at the other man's holsters -"you carry arms and he does not. You are right, sir; the country is lonely, there are rumors of highwaymen. and you never saw me before this morning. Let us part ways-you to your inn, and I to my good dame, or master, or whomever I may find. Good day, sir."

Good Duncan McDougall, kirk officer of Ballantyne Parish, and canniest of Scots, thoughtfully watched him spur his horse up another of the steep, muddy little hills, with the stumbling haste of an angry schoolboy. Society on the road was pleasant-but perchance a dangerous pleasure, when you know not with whom you were riding. and when your saddle-bags held forty pounds Scots, in good gold, to buy a set of communion silver for the Ballantype kirk. He had a trust, a reputation, a life to guard. Yet-"Tush! could the fellow blush like Kitty herself, and

yet harbor evil designs?" At a rude table in the little hovel up the road Fitzroy sat glowering over the knotted of figure, to whose eachle he paid no attention. "I've naught in my purse to pay for this," he flung out finally; "nor in my saddle-bags, either."

The woman chuckled without glee. "Yet there was a gentleman came part way with you," she observed. "Look! he climbs the hill now."

"And he travels armed," said Fitzroy, moodily. "My pistol dropped yesterday from a broken holster while I forded a stream. How do I know he carries aught worth killing a man for?"

"By his traveling armed," concisely. "Tut, Mr. Fitzroy! do you conceive, sir, that because luck has hitherto been with you in sending you cowards and unarmed travelers, who would willingly give up their purses to save their skins, it will be so always? Truly, sir, you speak like-"

"A coward," said Fitzroy, "I am not one, but"-his face clearing a little-"he who comes hither is a coward, and I may get off without bloodshed. In faith, I was born a gentleman, and even in battle, where a man may kill and not hang for it, there would always come an uneasy voice between me and my sword, that would sound like a cry of reproach from my mother or sister. Yet I have not seen either of them since I was a lad of twenty. How, now, sir!" starting up as the shadow of a man fell across the doorway. changed your mind?" "You have

"I come to crave your pardon, sir," said Duncan McDougall, gravely. "And to eat supper with you, if this good woman hath aught to give us. Pardon my suspicions, and give me your company for the rest of the road, for, in truth. I am afraid of its loneliness."

He stood up rigidly, while Fitzroy opened his eyes in unfeigned surprise, and loudly recited a long Presbyterian grace, before he would take the seat indicated for him.

"A man of religion!" exclaimed Fitzroy. He had not intended to say it back to tell you where he carries his aloud; but the performance of so distinctly devotional an act in the presence of a stranger was as astounding to him as it was unremarkable to the Scotsman, who complacently replied, his mouth full of bread and cheese:

"Officer of Ballantyne kirk, and a man of peace toward all."

"Yet you travel armed," suggested Fitzroy, doubtfully.

"A commendable means of securing pence, is it not, sir? I hear over-much of these so-called 'gentlemen of the read,' who kill a man in haste and discover his poverty at leisure, to have a mind to ride unprotected when I am traveling alone."

"Have you ever heard," asked Fitzroy, carelessly, "of one they call 'the Irish Paddy,' who hath been making himself somewhat officious in these parts?" The Scotsman shook his head. The slow-creeping twilight hid the slow-creeping red in Fitzroy's face, as he said, lightly:

"Oh, well, these gentry practice for gain, rather than fame, so 'tis not surprising you should not have heard of him yet. Besides, he hath so far kept his hands clean of blood, they say. which saves a man a deal of notice. But may I ask, sir, why 'tis you appear to grudge these poor fellows the name of gentleman, to which many of them, by birth at least, are entitled?"

"Because"-the speaker's utterance was still rendered indistinct by vigorous mastication, while Fitzroy sat and unhappily eved his food-"h birth at least, personally disqualified for that title, I, an honest man, begrudge it to a set of cowardly thieves. Twas a long time since most of them were born, and I hold that their patent of gentility hath expired. After all, 'tis but a bit of Judas-work, betraying their harmless fellows for a few filthy coins. Pah! I am a farmer and work, in the dirt all day, but I would not touch such money."

"Hold, sir!" said Fitzroy, impetuously, while the old woman frowned in the background. "You are harsh, methinks. I, too, am honest, yet I have the poor man's sympathy for him who feels the world owes him a living and the right to collect it."

"And I," disputed McDougall, "have the poor man's sympathy for those who, having by hard labor collected it, desire to keep it. "Tis natural, is it not?"

"You argue well, sir; yet there is something to say for highwaymen sometimes. Take the case of him I just spoke of, the Irishman they call 'Paddy of the Roads.' "Tis not a man I admire, nor would I willingly stand in his shoes; yet 'tis said that he was a fine, gallant lad ten years since, ruined at cards by a cheating gamester colonel whom he could not denounce-"

"Why," said the Scotsman, "that I call cowardice."

"What mean you, sir! What dare you?" Fitzroy's hand was where soldiers carry their swords. He had sprung to his feet and his voice echoed indignantly to the low rafters. "I will not-tut, what a vile temper I am in, for that I am crossed in a friendly argument! Pardon me, sir; and laugh at my heat as much as you wish."

But it was not laughter that looked out in the steadfast gaze of McDougall, who had laid down his knife and fork. The two men were alone, the woman having slipped out to fodder the horses. In sickening anxiety Fitzroy awaited the next speech, whose slow, unchanged tones brought the breath back to his quivering body:

"I, myself, may wax hot in putting the other case-that of the honest wayfaring man of trade or toil. I, for instance, of course, carry naught worth taking."

"Of course not," agreed Fitzroy, craftily, the traveler's previous words yet ringing in his ears: "My horse carries a heavy load."

"Yet, were it but 30 shillings, or but one shilling, or but sixpence, I would not deliver it up for thirty blunderbuses in my face. Folly it may be-I extremely frugal fare brought him by claim not that it is courage, yet 'tis the an old woman, garried of face and British nature that I have. Who took It must take my life-and life is sweet to me. You eat nothing, sir."

"Tis this cursed choking bread," said Fitzroy, breathing heavily. "Here, woman, have you no more milk?"

"Nay.sir"-the crone had reappeared; not a drop more. My cow is gone dry. "I have plenty in my dish," inter-posed McDougall. "Nay, man, dip in, dip in! We farmers stick not at fine table civilities."

A certain somber determination in his piercing eye compelled Fitzroy to obey reluctantly. Then he did not eat the bread.

"You have not asked me why life is sweet," said the Scotsman. "Surely a happy man should be an object of curiosity! Since you ask not, I will tell you of mine own accord. I am passably young, I have health and strength, I have land enough to wring a living from, and in December I am to marry the sweetest girl in all Scotland. It is much to live for, is ft not, sir?" with eyes riveted on Fituroy's.

"Gentlemen," interrupted their sinister-faced hostess, "am I bid to make up beds here? Or do you purpose to take the road?"

McDougall besitated. "First show me how my horse is lodged," he said to the old dame. Scarce had they disappeared together into the dusky doorway of the dilapidated outhouse before the woman sped eagerly back to Fitzroy. "Quick," she whispered, pulling him into the house. "Here"-producing a pistol from a cupboard-" 'tis his; I cut it from his holster whilst you supped. You need not fear him now. Tis a coward, anyway."

" 'Tis a brave man!" flashed Fitzroy, Yet if he sleeps here I need not. . Woman, he fed me from his own dish, And he would have dined me at the Golden Goblet, had I dared to show myself there."

"He hath reckoned for the supper already," grinned the crone. "I sped money.

"In his saddle-bags?"

"Nay, 'tis in a little buckskin bag within his coat. It clinks most amazing heavy, nor would he pull the string. 'After all, 'tis a trust and must not be touched,' he said, and paid me with a shilling from another pocket. Why hang you back, sir?"

A sudden sound smote the highwayman's ears before he could answerthe sound of swift hoofs splashing on a wet road. Breaking to the door he saw a horse and rider making furious baste. His prey had escaped him.

"Quick, fool, my horse!" he cried, flinging himself frantically across the beast when she brought it, and extending, instead of good-by, a hasty hand for the purloined pistol. He could scarcely account for his change of mood. Chagrin at being outwitted, fear of remaining as tame sport for the old woman's gibes, pricked him on. His fresher horse quickly outran the traveler's more jaded one, which, at the sound of a shot from behind, threw his wounded rider in the thick mud and galloped on, mad with terror.

In the one instant of Fitzroy's dismounting the hurt man struggled to his feet. "Come on, sir," he said, with ghastly composure. "You have not yet dipped your hands in my blood. You dipped them last-in my dish-you wretched betrayer-coward!" As he fell in the vain attempt to pull his adversary down with him, one sharp cry of pain, of human dependence ered in the air, preceding a deadly stillness: "Kitty!"

"Why need he shrick that?" muttered Fitzroy. "Tis strange. In faith, I would his Kitty had him, and I the buckskin bag."

Recalled to the need for haste, he knelt down and fumbled for the bag. opened it, and then laughed loudly and hoarsely. "Shillings! One, two"-he counted thirty, and his hands shook. He wished mightily it had been any other number, even a lesser; and could not have sworn that the pale, dead, scornful lips beside him did not repeat:

"Tis a bit of Judas-work. In the bag lay a letter, whose address: "To Mrs. Dorothy White, "Durham."

struck him with a vague, unpleasant sense of familiarity:

"Dr. Aunt," It read, "these 30s, will be handed you by a brave gentleman and true, Mr. Duncan Mehlongall of this place. Him J am to mary in a littel time. The silver peaces are for you to add to that J gave you for a weding gown wh. you, honoured Aunt, promised me the favour to by for me. Send it back by him, and J pray you of yr. comesy to lov him as you love me, for J love him as J do my Self. Yr moast dutiful neace, "KITTY FITZROY."

Thirty pieces of silver, flung in as many different directions, splashed into the little roadside ditches. "I have betrayed the innocent blood!" cried Fitz-

His face was ashen. He peered with eyes of horror at the still thing at his feet. "A bad business!" he muttered. "Brother-in-law, I could wish you a better part in the play than that of my first victim."

He heard horse-hoofs and trembled like an aspen. Hastily wiping his fingers in the moist grass, he mounted his horse and rode off, with savage spurs in his sides.

The hoofs followed-then abruptly stopped where the wounded man had laboriously risen on one elbow, watching the highwayman's fleeing figure. At a familiar neigh he smiled grimly and painfully, first glancing at the untouched panniers of the Ballantyne kirk's good gold, which lay on the faithful creature's back, then at the muddy coins scattered round him. His stunned senses rallied slowly.

"Kitty'll never cry for her coins," he said, feebly. "Gin I live to come back. Ay, I'll live. Were I no better kirk officer than you poor craven makes of a highwayman, 'twould go ill! Why called he me 'brother?" "

And Fitzroy, speeding frantically on to tell him.—Saturday Evening Post.

A LITTLE GIRL'S LETTER.

Written to the President Secured Her Brother's Discharge from the Army.

In the little village of Salem, in south-

ern Illinois, lives, in a small cottage, a poor family consisting of "Billie" and Sevilla Holmes, the parents of two sons. "Billie," Jr., and Jacob R., also one daughter, Blanch, an interesting little brown-eyed maiden of 12 years the heroine of this narrative. The mother has been in delicate health. In June last the younger son enlisted as a private in the Nineteenth regiment. The invalid mother yearned for her boy, the little sister wanted her brother, and all grieved to see the mother rapidly sailing in health. With the faith of a trustful child, the little girl wrote to President McKinley: "Please discharge my brother Jake at once; my mamma is sick and will never get well if he does not come home." In a few days came a brief response from the executive mansion to the effect that her request would be granted. Blanch, thinking this all the permission necessary for the release of any soldier, mailed it at once to her brother, in camp near Ponce. Porto Rico. Long before that message reached its destination Jake was on his way home. September 16, A. D. 1898. will be a red letter day in his life. While with a comrade guarding Spanish prisoners and carving from a gourd a jewel box for his little sister, the voice of Sergt. Laufer was heard calling: "Jake, oh, Jake! Come here, quick; turn in your equipment and get off this island. You're going home." The mystery was explained when Lieut. Howard gave him his honorable discharge. But not until Jake's arrival home, September 28, did he know the part his little sister had in obtaining it from our kind-hearted president

CALM ADVICE IN RAINSTORM.

The Tall Man Tells the Little One Who Runs Into Him to Hold His Head Up.

It was the day that it rained so hard and snowed a little to help out, the day that the big steamer foundered opposite the Auditorium and half a dozen other vessels were in distress along the lake shore. The wind and rain swept through the streets in blinding gusts and every probatrian plowed along with head bent to escape the wind, umbrella firmly clutched to avoid its destruction and deep disgust for everybody and everything written on his averted countenance, says the Chicago Chronicle.

One little man was wrestling with wind and weather in a desperate sort of way as he forced his course along Fifth avenue. His head was down so low that he could see nothing except the paving blocks, and still the shifting wind carried the rain into his face at times. At Washington street he essayed to cross the street, and in doing so ran directly into a tall man who was trying to get along with his head in the air. The tall man doubled up for an instant, but he did not get mad. Instead of saying harsh and profane things to the man who had thus buffeted him he said:

"Hold your head up." Then he strode

The man who received this piece of advice did not for a moment or two realize what had been said. He stood still, and when it dawned upon him that a perfect stranger had volunteered a rule of conduct to be followed on stormy day he turned with a frown and a retort on his lips. But the tall man was far away and the little fellow bowed his head and once more plunged into the storm.

PUDDING MADE OF CEMENT.

The Mistake of an English Company Cook Deprived the Soldiers of Their Desert.

Some time ago, writes a volunteer in the London Telegraph, I spent a week with a garrison battery in a south coast fort. On the last day the sergeants sat down to an exceptionally fine dinner, the crowning glory of which was a large plum pudding. I had made the pudding two days before, had it boiled. and now, reheated, it made its appearance, amid the welcome shouts of my brother warriors, and I naturally felt a bit proud of it, for I hadn't been a

ship's cook for nothing.
"Seems mighty hard," remarked the sergeant major, as he vainly tried to stick his fork into it. "Have you boiled us a cannon ball, Browney?"

"Or the regimental football?" asked another.

"Where did you get the flour from?" questioned Sergt. Smith. "Where from?" I retorted. "From

store No. 5, of course." "The deuce you did!" roared the quartermaster sergeant. "Then, hang you, you've made the pudding with

Portland cement." And so it proved. That pudding is now preserved in the battery museum Some English Emigrants.

Up till now, if the inhabitant of Norfolk village emigrates, it is generally, to America, says a writer in Longman's Magazine, and very often he does not like America when he gets there. I remember a blacksmith with whom I was well acquainted going there, but in a couple of years or so be was to be seen working at the old forge in his native village. I asked him why he had come back, and he told me that he earned plenty of money out there. but he "didn't like it." When I was in New York a tailor came to see me who had been an apprentice here in Bungay. He told me the same story. Plenty of money, especially at times, but he "meant to get back as soon as he could." Also I had a conversation with an English coachman whose tale was much into the dusk, scourged by visions of a the same. His wages were large, but Last Judgment when he should stand | "there weren't no society for such as with Cain and Judas, looked not back him;" in the states they were all "gents or niggers."

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