

LEFT IN CHARGE

By Phil Bryce

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"Now, Sadie," said Aunt Deborah Warner to her niece, who had come down from Chicago to pass a month at the old farmhouse, "you've got to drive to town this afternoon to sign some law papers. You'll be left all alone in charge for three or four hours. Do you think you'll be scared?"

"What will there be to scare me?" asked the girl of twenty, who was swinging in a hammock.

"Why, nothing at all. If a tin peddler comes along, you want to shake your head before he has time to get down from his wagon. If a tramp stops and opens the gate you must look as fierce as you can and motion him to pass on. If you see a mad dog you will run into the house of course, and if a robber tries to enter you just stand right up to him and tell him you've got a loaded gun in the house and know how to shoot."

"But is there a loaded gun?" asked Sadie as she slightly shivered at the thought.

"I guess that old gun behind the closet door in my bedroom has been loaded for the last ten years. Uncle Elisha kept it loaded for ovals before he died. Don't shoot a robber unless he comes to rob and can't be persuaded otherwise, and then shoot at his legs and give him a chance to lie and reform."

"But I must shoot if he refuses to go away?"

"You must. You must point the gun in his direction and shut your eyes, and don't faint away when you hear the report."

Half an hour after Aunt Deborah's departure a tin peddler drove up to the gate, but before he had hardly halted his rig Miss Sadie was shaking her head at the rate of forty shakes a minute. He called out that he had added mouse traps and washboards.

"ARE YOU A ROBBER OR ONLY A COMMON MAN?" INQUIRED THE GIRL.

to his regular stock, but forty more shakes discouraged him into passing on.

Twenty minutes later she heard the latch of the gate suddenly click, and she dumped herself out of the hammock to find a first class specimen of the Weary Willie advancing up the path. She motioned as Aunt Deborah had told her to. She motioned with both hands at once, but the tramp paid no attention. He was within five feet of her when she cried out:

"Stop where you are!"

"That's better," he said as he came to a halt. "I took it from your flinging your arms about that you had St. Vitus dance. Any cold witties which would suit?"

"Sir," commanded Sadie as she drew herself up, "I want you to understand that I have a gun!"

"Just so, little one."

"And it's loaded."

"Perfectly. A gun is as harmless as a rag doll when it isn't loaded. I'd like to change places with the gun for an hour or two."

"If you do not at once go away," continued Sadie in trembling tones, "I shall be under the painful necessity of shooting you."

"By ginger, but what a heroine!" laughed the tramp.

He understood the situation. He knew that she was alone and ready to be scared into a fit, but was making a brave bluff against her womanly weakness. There was a strain of chivalry in his composition. Stepping back and lifting his greasy old cap off his tousled hair he bowed and said:

"Fair miss, please observe that I gracefully retire and give you the victory."

When he had disappeared down the road Miss Sadie congratulated herself on her nerve and sat down on the steps of the veranda to look for a mad dog. Aunt Deborah had said a mad dog would come next. There was a nip somewhere, however, for it was a robber that showed up about forty minutes after the tramp's broad back had become only a dot against the sky line. The robber came from the west, walking in the middle of the highway. As he reached the barn, a few rods below the house, he turned in and was quickly lost to sight. Sadie waited with beating heart for ten minutes to see if he intended to advance upon the house from the barn and take her by surprise, but as time went on she made up her mind that he had come to steal hay or straw instead of household effects. He must be driven away just the same, and she was the only one to drive him. Aunt Deborah depended upon her.

It was another ten minutes before the girl could work up courage enough to go in after the old shotgun and drag it forth by its muzzle. But once armed she felt braver and made her way down the path to the barn, whose doors stood wide open to the summer wind and sunshine. She approached them cautiously, fearing that the stranger was in ambush and ready to spring forth. But as she finally stood and looked into the barn she was considerably relieved to find the man lying at full length on a scant bed of hay. Robbers do not generally take a daylight nap before robbing, and though the man looked wayward and somewhat disreputable, his face as far as she could see was not evil looking. Perhaps he was not a robber.

"Are you a robber or only a common man?" inquired the girl at last as she leaned over the chestnut. The man sat up and smiled in a slyly way and looked around with a bewildered air, and it was a minute before he vaguely replied:

TEAS THAT ARE WORTH FORTUNES

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

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Jess was churning down at the spring house and slugging like a lark the while. Her pink calico frock was turned up high in front, so high her feet were plainly visible—pretty feet, in spite of the scuffed shoes, smallish, well arched and light stepping, to say nothing of the slender ankles. The ankles matched the slender taper wrists, but gave no hint of the dimple swelling arms revealed by sleeves rolled halfway to the shoulder.

Big, soft, new leafage hung down variable shadows on her bare head. She kept the dasher moving merrily, now and again putting down her feet, and she kept the water level clear and not too loud—altogether, the man coming down the creek side in hand waving boots, with a rod in his hand, a creel slung from his shoulder, would have been justified in finding himself glad of her presence.

He was distinctly not glad—curiously so. He had been whipping the stream for trout since sunrise with no luck at all. All his hope was centered upon the cool, deep hole below the spring house. He knew the stream of old, and that particular reach of it had never yet failed to give him good sport. Why must this creel be empty? Fish had sensitive ears—he was certain of it. Nothing would rise to the most tempting lure after such affronting of the auricular sense.

"George, I wish she was in—Halifax!" he said to himself as he prepared, rather before entering the banquet hall, to catch the trout. He had had Robin Adair, with an accomplice of whistling, buttermilk get on his nerves. As the song kept up he called over his shoulder, in anything but an amiable voice:

"Madam, I will pay you double price for the butter you are churning if you will go away this afternoon and let me fish in peace."

"Indeed you won't!" Jess retorted, with the least toss of the head. "Tend to your own business, Mr. fisherman. I promise you I'll tend strictly to mine. Buy my butter, indeed! And I don't! It's going into cake for the pie tomorrow."

The fisherman, Allan Beckley by name, scowled at his image in the water and swore—under his breath. He knew landmarks and land lines there—this noisy girl must belong to the people who had bought his uncle's place. Vaguely he recalled the name—Wilmet. Wilmet, possessions came down the stream proper belonged to old Squire Bass, from whom he had leased exclusive fishing privilege. The churrer was clearly upon her own ground, therefore unassailable. In high bad humor he splashed across the pool head and sent his fly spinning out in a tremendous cast from the opposite bank, although by all rules of angling the place was hopeless.

It must have been a day for the traversing of art and rule. The fly was hardly settled before, with a vigorous upswirling rush, a monster trout took it. For the next ten minutes Allan Beckley was conscious of nothing but his quarry. The quarry was game and wary as ever rose to a fly. Up, down, athwart stream he darted, diving, plunging, now and again leaping clear of the water, coming with such a rush backward the singing reel bore headlong against the rocky bottom to strongly the plant rod bent almost double. The fisherman stood just below a high shelving bank. He would have plunged in the water but that there was no good foothold. Cautiously, with nice judgment and sportsman skill, he played his catch. It was one to rejoice in the glint of all trout in Cleveland. Five pounds at the very least. Idly he began to speculate if it might not be the same wily fellow who had so often outwitted him when he was a native strippling. His ill humor evaporated magically. He was at peace with himself and the world.

The trout was weakening. Though he fought gamely, the rashes were less electric. In five minutes more—in three—in one—with a long steady pressure he drew the fighting creature to the bank, shifted his rod deftly and made to slip the landing net underneath. And then—and then! Something gave way under and behind him. With a lunge splash he went down into four feet of water, with a ton of loosened rock at his back. He swung his arms to save himself. The trout, as the line slackened, dashed madly away and went to the bottom upon the farther side. But he could not break loose the hook nor instantly chafe his line in two against the bottom. There was still a bare chance of him. Beckley, bruised and shaken though he was, tried to turn about, snatch his rod and fight the battle to the bitter end.

He could not do it. Somehow the falling rocks had jammed his feet into a crevice of the bottom, beyond his power to pull them out. He tugged and strained and swore, this time audibly, for some minutes. He was not in the least hurt. His feet had room aplenty in their rocky channel, but he could not get them out until the stone was moved from over it. He forgot the hook, the line, the tugging and churning at the spring house, he remembered her now, noting both sounds had ceased. He was on the point of calling to her when he caught a flash of pink on the farther bank and heard her say with sparkling malice: "How do you like it, spouting yourself? Ah! you ready to cry like a child?"

"How do you know I caught him?" Beckley retorted. The girl shrugged her shoulders the least bit. "I watched you to wish you had luck you were so rude," she said. And as she said it he noted that neither accent nor intonation was rustic. He looked perfect. "I was ready to please forgive me and get fetch something to help me out of this."

"I'll help you out myself on two conditions," Jess said, dimpling beautifully. Beckley bowed meekly. "Only name them," he said. "The first is—'I'll be your friend if you'll be mine. I've fed him now and again ever since we came here.'"

"Henceforth he is sacred," Beckley said, slapping his line and tossing the rod away. "Now for condition second."

"You shall hear that when you're out of the woods and water," Jess said, a sly, evil, dimpling again. In a whiff she had run to a foot log a little way up stream, crossed it and was beside Beckley, a stout fence stake in her hand. "Get a good purchase with it

JESS

By Martha McCulloch-Williams

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Many expositions of stupendous character make up the World's Fair of 1904. Each part is a vast and distinct show. Each building shelters many acres of wonderful things—wonderful because they are the choicest of their kind. Every nation on the globe is represented. Every state and territory is here with its best and making the most of its greatest opportunity.

The fact that China has not been a large exhibitor at world's fairs gives her great exhibit here a prominence quite exceptional. It is a wonderland of ingenious productions. We know China best by reason of her extensive exports of teas, which have found a vast market in the United States and other countries. Her commercial interests therefore prompted her to make a display of teas that we should not forget.

In sealed glass jars China displays in the Liberal Arts Palace some 1,200 kinds of tea. Young Hyson and Old Hyson have a string of tea relations longer than the genealogical chain of a Plymouth Rock. They are neatly selected "chops," in the language of the tea farmer, and these classes do not embrace medicinal teas, which are quite another lot in the rather modest number of 400.

The teas exhibited vary in price from a few cents a pound to some rare and exclusive kinds that are worth their weight in gold, the tea in the latter cases being placed on one side of the scales and pure gold on the other—that is to say, the tea of this expensive kind is worth about \$20 gold an ounce. Only a very small quantity of this exclusive leaf is exhibited, and it is grown in carefully guarded tea plantations or gardens right under the shadow of the great wall of China. Its cultivation is prohibited for any use save for the imperial family of China and a few of the favored high officials.

Mention has been made of the word "chop" in connection with tea, and it may be interesting to the everyday reader to know what the word actually signifies. The tea leaf is grown in various districts of the Chinese empire on

Improving a Cigar by Putting it Out.

Lighting a new Havana, a downtown professional man, after taking a few whiffs, blew into his cigar and forced a lot of smoke out of the fiery end. Then he laid it aside and permitted the spark to die out.

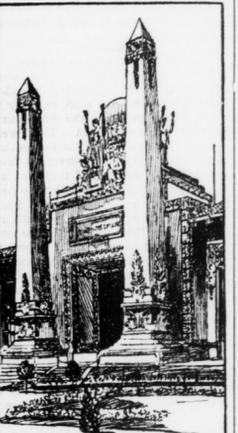
When asked for an explanation he said: "Well, I learned that habit some years ago, and find that a cigar which has been smoked in this manner allowed to go out makes a much better smoke. I take several vigorous draws in order to bring the heat well through the weed. If a cigar becomes cold while it is saturated with smoke it has a musty odor; consequently it is necessary to blow steadily and quite hard before extinguishing the spark in order to clear out all the smoke that has been drawn in between the layers of tobacco. After permitting the cigar to lie ten or fifteen minutes or even a half hour I find on relighting it that the flavor has greatly improved. The why and wherefore I am not philosophical enough to explain, but I know it makes a much better cigar. It also improves a toby. Try it and you'll agree with me."—Pittsburg Dispatch.

Pessimists on Man.

In his first novel, "Vivian Grey," written almost in boyhood, Disraeli writes: "The disappointment of manhood succeeds to the delusion of youth. Let us hope that the heritage of old age is not despair." While he writes thus in youth, with all the world before him, in his maturity he says in his finest novel, "Coningsby," "Youth is a blunder, manhood a struggle, old age a regret."

What has been called the most exquisite expression of pessimism is that of Sir William Temple, "When all is done human life is at the greatest and the best, but like a froward child that must be played with and humored a little to keep it quiet, it falls asleep, and then the cure is death."

Leopardi, the Italian essayist, says, "Our divildest pleasures spring from illusions; hence it is that, while children find everything in nothing, men find nothing in everything."



NORTH ENTRANCE PALACE OF MINES AND METALLURGY, WORLD'S FAIR.

large areas of ground which are often mistaken for single plantations. This is hardly ever the case, as the large tracts are very often owned by hundreds of different men, whose individual plots of ground bearing the tea plants are carefully mapped out, so that each individual owner may cultivate and pick his own crop of tea. Each owner likewise markets his own tea and puts his own special mark, or "chop," on the packages. Hence the term "chop" signifies an individual growth or picking of tea by one owner. In an area of tea land, say, a thousand acres, all apparently under one ownership, there may be some forty, fifty or more owners of the plantation and consequently a like number of "chops" of tea.

It must not be imagined that all these different owners of the tea get the same price for their commodity—far from it, as each of these individual tea growers has his own secrets for improving the quality and flavor of tea. Take, for instance, the Amoy and Fuchau districts, whence most of the tea for the United States comes. The owners of "chops" of tea varying from 10 to 200 chests of 50 pounds each, bring samples of their goods to the various foreign merchants for sale. These latter turn the Chinese tea growers over to the good offices of the foreign or American professional tea taster, who passes on the goods as to price. The tea taster has the samples infused, not by the usual process and method of curing, fixing a price accordingly, from which there is never any variation and which the tea grower must accept or go elsewhere to dispose of his wares. In a single tract of tea land like the one cited above the price has ranged from 14 cents, the lowest, to 48 cents, the highest, per pound among sixty-one different tea producers. A matter of great moment that also figures in the price of tea is that very often tea from the same district will have the various "chops" blended together in order to produce special favors.

Not Worth the Money.

A tall woman with a determined expression and surrounded by six children of assorted sizes approached the attendant of the menagerie and eyed him with a relentless gaze.

"What nationality is that elephant?" she inquired, indicating one close at hand.

"He's dreadful light colored to have come from tropical parts," said the woman sternly. "And look here," she added as the attendant started away from her family group; "they've got a mighty poor lot of animals here, according to my 'em. Not but one hump on any of 'em except that feller that's so old he keeps his eyes shut."

The attendant again essayed to do his part, but she clutched him by the sleeve.

"You tell the owners of this show what I say," she commanded. "You tell 'em that when a woman pays 50 cents for herself and one-fifty for a cent for herself she looks to see more'n one double hump and more hair on the single humpers, not have 'em look up if the muths had got into 'em. Now, mind you tell 'em."

JESS

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And push the rock down stream," she commanded. "The current will help you if it is slow here in the pool. Now! All together! There! It's over. You can come out or stay in, as you choose. Be careful, though, if you stand on this side to fish—the bluff is all honey-combed with water veins since last winter. The next landslip may be heavy enough to bury you."

"There will be no next landslip with me a-rolling!" Beckley said, scrambling out. "I ought to have known better. Be careful, though, if you stand on this side to fish—the bluff is all honey-combed with water veins since last winter. The next landslip may be heavy enough to bury you."

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