

"CUTTING DOWN"

By E. T. TAGGARD.

JOHNS FURLONG sat at his desk, in the office of Lord & Co. Close application to the duties of his position through a long series of years had driven the color from his face, until it resembled in hue the leaves of the open ledger before him. From bending over his desk his once broad shoulders had become rounded, and what was once a splendid physique had become emaciated, until scarcely sufficient flesh remained to hold his bony frame together.

One by one had the clerks who had been his assistants and companions been discharged, and their duties added to his, until, overtaxed, overworked and overworn, his brain threatened to succumb to the unceasing strain which was slowly but surely sapping away his very life. Yet no word of complaint or expostulation did he utter, but struggled on with an unwavering will to complete the new tasks which, together, made up the sum of his everyday life.

"We must economize," said Lord & Co. "Labor is a drug in the market, everybody is reducing expenses, and we must cut down—cut down—cut down," and as he threw himself composedly into his luxurious office chair, the small coins in his capacious pockets seemed to jingle out an echo—"Cut down—cut down—cut down!"

Wages had been cut down until the employees received scarcely enough compensation for their services to purchase a bare existence, and the working force of Lord & Co. had been reduced until one person was compelled to perform the labor of three. Business was brisk, but day after day found an employe being summoned to the private office of the firm, and his pale face, despairing look, and quivering lip, when he emerged therefrom, plainly indicated that he was another victim to the cutting-down process. A summons from the firm to an employe to visit their office was an inevitable death warrant to the victim.

One day John Furlong sat poring over his ledger. His face, if possible, was more haggard than ever, and his shoulders seemed rounder than usual. His eyes were deeply sunken, and the expression of pain that occasionally flashed across his marble features denoted that his iron will was endeavoring to keep in subjection the terrible nervous suffering under which he was laboring.

"Mr. Furlong," said the office boy, "Mr. Lord would be pleased to see you in his office."

John Furlong instinctively started. He dropped his pen mechanically, and after a moment's hesitation, during which the blood that flowed through his veins seemed to rush back to his heart, walked deliberately but sadly toward the office in which the senior member of the firm sat composedly.

"Ah, Mr. Furlong! Take a seat, Mr. Furlong—take a seat, Mr. Glad to see you! Ah, Mr. Furlong, we find we must cut down—we must reduce. Our expenses are altogether disproportionate to our receipts. Economy is our only safeguard, sir—I might say our only salvation. Boy, order me a carriage at 4, sure. We have concluded to dispense with your services, Mr. Furlong, and we will not need you after to-night."

"But, Mr. Lord, after ten years' service in your house, you will not dismiss me in so summary a manner."

"Can't be helped, Mr. Furlong; we must cut down. Everybody is cutting, and we must cut. Can get men to work for less, sir."

"But I am willing to work for less, Mr. Lord."

"Too late, sir—too late. Got a man engaged."

"Here is her card, brother. She is waiting below." John Furlong almost convulsively seized the card and read aloud: "Miss Florence Packard."

"Miss Florence Packard! I cannot see her, Emily—I cannot see her. Tell her I am indisposed. Offer any excuse you think proper, for I cannot—dare not see her to-day."

"I explained your feeble condition to her, John, but instead of withdrawing she seemed to be more anxious to see you than before," said Emily.

"Tell her I will be better to-morrow, and will call upon her. Tell her—"

The door opened gently, and a light footstep glided noiselessly across the carpeted floor toward the sofa on which John Furlong lay. He saw her, and tried to raise himself to a sitting posture.

"Florence!" "John!"

The effort had exhausted what little strength remained, and he fell back unconscious.

When he revived, Florence Packard sat by his side. Her lace shawl was thrown over the back of a chair, and her dainty little fan occupied another. She kept her little fan busily employed upon his face, and the lifeblood was fast returning into its regular channels. In a spirit of gratitude he extended his hand. She grasped it, and held it in hers. For a few minutes not a word was spoken on either side.

"John Furlong," said Florence, "I am not a stranger to the nature of your affection for me. I have known it for years. You love me. You have struggled on and on in the hope of prospering in business and bettering your condition before you made your affections known to me. I have watched you, John Furlong. I am rich, and you are poor. Day after day, with a salary that an unprincipled firm was cutting down, you saw your hopes crushed. Still you labored on with an unflinching zeal. To-day you were discharged—I heard it all. Mr. Lord went to the club, and there boasted of his conduct toward you. In the midst of his hilarity he was seen to reel in his chair and fall. A doctor was summoned, but life had fled. He who had 'cut down' others was in turn 'cut down' by the hand of God. When I heard of your misfortune I hastened here. Surrounded as I am by a host of giddy admirers, I saw at once, and read their hearts. They loved me for my money. There is one brave man who loves me for myself alone, and that man is John Furlong."

"Florence! Florence! you have read my heart aright."

"I know it, John. I also know that your love is returned. I have endeavored to disguise the fact from myself; but it is useless. You would not, from a sense of honor, ask me to become your wife—John Furlong; I ask you to become my husband. You are ill—I cannot leave you. Give me the right to remain and care for you—make me your wife."

"Oh, what joy it would be to me!" said John, in the ecstasy of the moment. "Florence Packard the wife of poor John Furlong! Never! never!"

"Not never, John, but forever," said Florence. "I do not care for what the world says. You are all to me—the world is nothing. You will consent?"

She pressed her claims eloquently and fervently, but still he resisted. He pleaded for delay.

"I will not leave this house save as the wife of John Furlong," said Florence.

He could resist no longer. When he breathed the happy consent, Florence would her delicate arms around him, and kissed the tears from his cheeks. A clergyman was sent for, and before an hour had passed Miss Florence Packard had become Mrs. John Furlong. When his health permitted, they removed from the apartments on the fourth floor to a granite mansion on West End avenue.

The house of Lord & Co. is no longer in existence. The share of the senior member was purchased for our friend, and it is now known as John Furlong & Co.; and when the clerks are summoned to the private office they always emerge with smiling faces. Their salaries have been increased to the old standard, and "cutting down" is unknown in the firm of John Furlong & Co.—New York Weekly.

Her Eye to the Future.

"The best time to buy Christmas gifts," said the economical girl, "is after Christmas. Last year I met a Brooklyn friend on Sixth avenue busily shopping, the day after New Year's, and she told me she was buying Christmas presents. I stared at her in surprise."

"Why, we had Christmas in New York last week," I said. "I always knew Brooklyn was slow, but—"

"I mean for next Christmas," she explained, ignoring my fling at her native city. "Just look here" and she opened one of those string bags out of towners always carry when they shop, displaying before my admiring eyes some expensive trifles that had been left over from the holiday season and marked down to less than half price. "I have about \$20 worth of things in there for which I have paid less than \$10," she said. "I'm going to put them away and bring them out for Christmas gifts next December. They'll be quite as good then as now. You know the fashions in glove boxes, handkerchiefs and such things never change, and for these lovely hand painted calendars, which I bought for a mere song, I shall simply put a new block of dates on them instead of the 1905 blocks which they have now—it's only a matter of a small amount of ingenuity and a less amount of glue."—New York Press.

For the saving of would-be suicides, the municipality of Rome has decided to employ police motor boats on the Tiber.



For the Younger Children...



NURSERY TRAVELS.

Mary went to France, Betty went to Spain, Bobby went around the world twice and home again. Mary took a doll, Betty took a shawl, Bobby took a shining sword and a rubber ball. What seems very strange, though it's true, I've heard, is that on his journeyings Bobby caught each word Mary spoke in France. Betty spoke in Spain, and they heard him, whether he talked in Greece or Maine. —Elizabeth L. Gould, in Youth's Companion.

A CURE FOR CARELESSNESS.

"And white frosted cakes, Dorothy, with baked apples in the little pink saucers!" Milly sighed blissfully. "I will come early, Milly," said her little cousin, positively, "and I guess that I will wear my little frock with the bows. Mother said I might."

"Dorothy!" "Yes, mother." "Now, dear, do be careful. Put on your hood and run down to the store and get a spool of blue silk for me. Be sure that it matches."

"Yes, mother." And Dorothy, looking in her red coat and hood not unlike a slightly red-bird, was off like a flash. Dorothy knew what her mother meant in her caution to her to be careful, and she pouted a little as she ran down the narrow street.

"I know that I am not always careful," she whispered to herself, "but I do not think it is nice in mother to be always reminding me of it."

"What can I do for you, Miss Dorothy? A spool of silk? What color, please?"

But Dorothy hardly heard him. She was searching everywhere for the scrap of silk which her mother had given her. She was quite sure that she had tucked it in her mitten. And then she took the next wrong step.

"I guess that it doesn't, either," said the man, pleasantly. "I have only one shade of blue."

How dreadfully ashamed Dorothy felt as she walked home!

"Why, Dorothy, what a long time you have been gone, child! It is almost dark. Did you get the thread? Run along and get your bread and milk, dear. It is growing late."

But Dorothy was not hungry. She scarcely dared breathe while her mother opened the little package. When she did so, she did not say anything, however. So Dorothy decided that it was all right, after all. After supper she had to play with Betty Baby until bedtime, while her mother sewed.

"It is very late, Dorothy," said her mother next morning. "I sat up so late last night that I overslept. I wish that you would take Mrs. Watson's waists home. She will want it for the reception this afternoon, and that was why I was in such a hurry last night to finish it. You will find the bundle on the table. Yes, you may take Betty Baby if you like."

Two hours later Dorothy's mamma called her. "Come here, Dorothy," she said in a strange voice. "I have something to show you."

Dorothy's little cheeks grew hot. Her mother was holding Mrs. Watson's waist up to the light. It was a light blue silk waist stitched with lavender. "Dorothy, what shall I do to help you to remember to be more careful?" her mother said. "I trusted to my eyes, dear, and after night I could not tell the difference. And now Mrs. Watson is disappointed and offended, and I must do all the work over again."

FRIENDS OR ENEMIES.

There was so much whispering in the cornfield we supposed the wind was blowing, making the long blades rustle. We did not understand their martial spirit.

All stood in ranks like soldiers. Each wore a tassel proudly on the head, and carried a blade and pennant—indeed some carried many—which made the rustling so much like whispering. As they all had ears, they could easily hear what was said; we at a distance could only guess.

Some of the tallest stalks with largest tassels and silvery plumes at each ear looked like officers. They asked: "What are these green stragglers in our midst? They don't stand up and face the music like soldiers, but creep slyly over the ground." "They don't wear plumes or carry banners." "Now and then one has a big yellow trumpet, but it makes no sound; it looks like a big yellow flower."

Some replied, "They are spies." Some said: "They are deserters from our enemies. We must watch them. If they increase in numbers or show fight, we must attack them."

Time passed. The corn ranks thinned, the tassels withered, the long pennants dried and sounded husky. At last they all stacked "blades" and "ears."

Then behold, on their parade ground, great yellow balls! "What are these great things like cannon balls?" huskily asked the seedy corn-stalks. "Are they mines, dynamite bombs, or what?" And they all shivered in the twilight. We could hear them, like the sound of dry leaves.

These dangerous yellow perils were soon piled high by the old stone wall like a fort well supplied with ammunition.

One night some boys made fierce-looking jack-o'-lanterns of some of them, marching about the field, striking terror to all who did not know them.

Some one cried out, "See those fellows among the corn stalks with pumpkins on their heads!"

So it was all explained, and these "enemies" found out they were akin, as both were of the vegetable family, each brave in its own line of march, each humane in giving food to the hungry, even to "insurgent" boys.

So there was "Peace."—Christian Register.

WRONG SIDE UP.

Jack was cross; nothing pleased him. His mother gave him the choicest morsels for his breakfast and the nicest toys, but he did nothing but fret and complain. At last his mother said, "Jack, I want you to go right up to your room, and put on your clothes wrong side up."

Jack started. He thought his mother must be out of her wits. "I mean it, Jack," she repeated, looking earnestly at him.

Jack had to obey. He had to turn his stockings wrong side out, and put on his coat and trousers and his collar wrong side out. When his mother came up to him, there he stood—a forlorn, funny-looking boy, all linings and seams and ravelings—before the glass, wondering what his mother meant; but he was not quite clear in his conscience.

SAVING A COMRADE.

A Flock of Terns Rescued a Wounded Mate From Its Hunter.

Stories of affection and apparent reason among wild animals have divided the "nature writers" into two schools. One believes that animals act merely from instinct; the other holds that the dumb brute feels and reasons. In "The Life of a Scotch Naturalist" Mr. Smiles quotes from the journal of Thomas Edwards the story of how a little flock of terns rescued a wounded companion whom the naturalist had shot.

I fired, and he came down with a broken wing, screaming as he fell into the water. The report of the gun, together with his cries, brought together the party he had left, in order that they might ascertain the cause of the alarm. After surveying their wounded brother round and round, as he was drifting unwittingly toward the shore with the flowing tide, they came flying in a body to the spot where I stood, and rent the air with their screams. These they continued to utter, regardless of their own individual safety, until I began making preparations for receiving the approaching bird. I could already see that it was a beautiful adult specimen, and I expected in a few moments to have it in my possession, since I was not very far from the water's edge.

While matters were in this position I beheld, to my utter astonishment, two of the unwounded terns take hold of their disabled comrade, one at each wing, lift him out of the water and bear him out seaward. They were followed by two other birds.

After having carried him about six or seven yards they let him gently down again, and the two who had hitherto been inactive took him up. In this way they continued to carry him alternately until they had conveyed him to a rock at a considerable distance, upon which they landed him in safety.

I made toward the rock, wishing to obtain the prize which had been so unceremoniously snatched from my grasp. I was observed, however, by the terns, and instead of four, I had in a short time a whole swarm about me. On my near approach to the rock I once more beheld two of them take hold of the wounded bird as they had done before, and bear him out to sea in triumph, far beyond my reach.

Hawk and Jack Rabbit.

Two weeks ago a correspondent asked for reports on the action of small game in dodging the assault of hawks and other birds of prey.

Some years ago two of us were hunting quail and rabbits in the northern part of Kansas and were walking along the railroad track when we came to a section gang, and inquiring of the foreman if he could direct us where the other party could get a jack rabbit to take to his home in Chicago, he pointed to an adjoining field and stated "there was a large one that lived in the field, if a hawk, that had been after him for two weeks, had not got him." While talking he pointed to a large hawk in the distance and said: "If he comes this way we can soon tell if he has yet caught the jack." The hawk came sailing on, and when over the field made a swoop down upon the ground, and as he rose in the air a jack rabbit darted out of the stubble and ran in our direction, and the hawk made two darts at the jack in plain sight of us. As it would near the jack he would flatten himself out upon the ground and as the hawk passed over him he would spring up and run toward us. Thus eluding the hawk, he came quite near us, trying to get into some very tall rank grass and weeds by the side of the railroad. As the hawk was making his fourth dive, a load of No. 4 shot from my 12-gauge Parker ended the destruction of game by that field robber, and before I could object my friend had killed the jack.

We noticed that the jack would squeal whenever the hawk darted at him, but a close examination of the back and ears of the jack showed that he had not been touched by the talons of the hawk.

This being the only time that I was ever close enough to carefully note the action of the hunted I look forward with anticipation to the reports of other brothers of the field who have had more and better opportunities to note the acts of self-defense on the part of the hunted.—Correspondence in Forest and Stream.

Too Impressionable.

Of John S. Sargent, who has been accused of painting a Baltimore physician's beard blue, a Bostonian said the other day:

"Mr. Sargent will take this fling about the blue beard good humoredly. He likes flings at artists. At a dinner here during his late visit to America, I heard him tell a pretty good anecdote at his own expense.

"He was visiting, he said, a country family, near Woodstock, and one morning by a lake side he set up his easel and began to paint. His subject was the stretch of water and the rolling hills behind.



THE MERRY SIDE OF LIFE

GUESSING.

A man will struggle hard and long to gain what he esteems success. He wins it; feels that he was wrong, and starts in on another guess. —Boston Courier.

MONEY IN IT.

"Knicker—'Strange they didn't name the baby after its rich uncle.' Bocker—'No; he looked at it, and said he'd give them \$10,000 not to.'—Harper's Bazaar.

A SURE CURE.

Puffenbarg—"I'd give anything to know how you managed to reduce your weight." Thino—"I have made it impossible to get much to eat, by joining an Anti-Tipping Society."—Brooklyn Life.

IN HONOR BOUND.

"I ain't dirty by choice, ma'am, the hobo explained. 'I'm bound by honor. I wrote a testimonial for a soapmaker once an' promised ter use no other.'" "Well, why don't you use that?" demanded Mrs. Goodley.

"Because, ma'am, dat firm failed in 1887."—Philadelphia Ledger.

A MAIDEN PHILOSOPHER.

"I suppose you will marry when you grow up?" said the visitor, pleasantly. "No," replied the thoughtful little girl, innocently. "Mamma says papa is more care than the children, so I guess the care of my children will be enough for me without the care of a husband."—Chicago Journal.

A BAD BREAK.

"My husband could never write any poetry unless he was smoking," said the one in black. "I believe your husband is dead," said the man, with a far-off look. "Yes, he is." "Do you suppose he is writing any poetry now?"—Yonkers Statesman.

OLD FRIENDS.

The Wife—"What luck?" The Husband (wearily)—"None whatever." The Wife—"Were there no servants in the intelligence office?" The Husband (sadly)—"Lots of them, but they had all worked for us before."—Woman's Home Companion.

FRENZIED FINANCE.

"I made money to-day all right. I sold our piano for \$150." "Made money? Why, you told me it cost you \$350." "I know, but I never paid for it."—New York Evening Mail.

THE CHUGS.

Mrs. Chugwater—"This paper says the passengers escaped on a raft. How could they make a raft at sea?" Mr. Chugwater—"They could use the ship's log, couldn't they? Why don't you use your own reasoning faculties once in a while?"—Chicago Tribune.

THE CENSURER.

"I heard you swearing at an awful rate this morning. What was the matter?" said the first fat dweller. "Why, I was mad at that coal man for swearing so at the poor horse he was trying to back into the court!" explained the other, with flashing eyes. "It was awful!"—Detroit Free Press.

CIRCULATED SOME.

"Have you a library in your town?" asked the New York man. "Oh, yes," replied the Westerner. "A circulating one?" "Well, it wasn't intended for that sort of a library, but we had two or three eyeclozes out our way that circulated it considerably?"—Yonkers Statesman.

MORE TO THE POINT.

"Ef yer real interested," said Deacon Skinner, "I'll tell ye what I want fur that horse." "Oh, I wouldn't be interested in knowin' that," replied Farmer Shrade. "No?" "No; but I wouldn't mind knowin' what yer'd take."—Philadelphia Public Ledger.

AS REVISED.

"A horse! A horse!" exclaimed King Richard. "My kingdom for a horse!" "There isn't one in the building, your Majesty," said one of the sopes behind the scenes in a husky, agonized, stage whisper. "Society is using all of 'em for a horse show!"

Realizing his mistake, he called for an automobile, but it was too late. A moment more and Richmond was upon him.—Chicago Tribune.