LUBBER LAST

By Grace H. Boutelle

EVER since they had come to Perkinsville De Peyster and his mother had failed to adjust their respective standpoints to a mutual harmony.

To begin with, it was spring. With the delicious odor of resinous smoke from the boughs that had banked the house assailing one's nostrils, who could resist joining the dancing silhouettes that circled the bonfire and daring one's fate by leaping across it in swaggering competition as the flames died down?

But she drew lurid pictures of his certain fate if he should repeat the offense. Blind defiance rose insurgent within him. He would go. And then all of a sudden he remembered what his father said and hung his head to think how those grave, kind eyes of his would look at him now.

"Take good care of mamma," he had said at the last. "You must be her big brother and never let her worry about you, she's so little and delicate." And then he had whispered over two or three times, "My pretty little wife, my dear little girl!"

And De Peyster had tried with all his might to remember. But often it did seem as if it would have been a little easier if she could have understood that one was disgraced if one did not keep neck and neck with "the other fellows" in every prank they played.

There was a long and weary period of dooryard discipline after this episode. There were a good many times when De Peyster had to clinch his fists as tight as he could and remember his father very hard.

By and by June came, quivering with gold green sunlight, perfumed with a universal blossoming and pungent with the joy of living. At this time every true joy thrills with the half realized rapture of it all and finds the fullest expression of his ecstasy in going swimming.

Every bright morning in some part of the town there was sure to be a group of boys toeing a line, their necks bobbing eagerly forward and their bodies giving anticipatory jerks and twitches as they waited for the word. When the leader said "Go!" they darted forth, and there was a kaleidoscopic and dissolving view of legs racing madly down a side street that led to the river. Then collars came off, coats followed, as they ran with undiminished speed, the fellow who was farthest ahead sometimes slowing up with magnificent daring to get off his shoes and stockings while the others were still hampered by shirts and trousers, and by the time they tumbled in headlong competition over the bank the nimblest carried their entire wardrobe on their arms and flashed whitely into the water while the laggers fumbled at their shoe lacings. The unfortunate who popped into the river, flushed and panting, after all the rest were in was greeted with taunting cries of: "Lubber last! Lubber last!"

De Peyster had never been told not to go in swimming. It had not occurred to his mother as among the list of his possible perils, as she was in blissful ignorance of the fact that "the other fellows" did it.

So it was with the thrilling exultance of the Greek runner that he set his toe on the line with the rest and hurled himself forward, head up and elbows in.

The first few rods it felt like flying. His feet scarcely seemed to touch the ground. Then a pair of legs flashed by him, and another and another. He gathered his strength and shot forward again, but another pair of legs went by, and another and another.

They were tearing off their coats; they were stripping off their shirts. He felt at his collar, wrenched it off and flung it away, to have both hands free for his coat and shirt. They were almost at the bank now. He could see Micky Daly's white skin dazzle in the sun as he took a splendid dive ahead of the rest. His own feet were growing heavy, and there was a mist before his eyes. The knot in his shoe lacing would not come untied. A savage rage filled him. If he could have cut off his foot to rid himself of the hampering shoe, he would scarcely have hesitated. You were ruled out if you went into the water with anything left on. As he struggled and perspired and agonized the two or three whom he had distanced leaped past him, and as he shook the shoe off at last and made a dash for the bank he heard the air ringing with "Lubber last! Lubber last!" and slowly realized that it was meant for him.

He tried manfully two or three other days, but it was always the same way. His muscles were flabby from the dooryard discipline, and he could not pick up in a few weeks what the others had acquired through joyous years of summer vagabondage.

He took it quietly and good naturedly, but it went deep.

His mother found out the custom shortly and forbade him to go near the water.

As for De Peyster himself, the numbness of despair settled upon him. Now he could never learn to redeem himself, to have some day perhaps the ineffable joy of being the first in, ahead of Jimmy Spratt, ahead of Micky Daly, ahead of everybody. His career was ended before it had begun.

"But I got to not let her worry," was the rueful conclusion he always reached. And then he breathed hard and winked fast.

Jimmy was his constant friend and brought him alleviating messages from time to time, such as that "the other fellers all say he has lots of sand and kin do as well as the next feller if he has half a chance."

When even these encouraging remarks ceased to comfort, he gave him his own horned toad as a last desperate resort. The effect was wonderfully efficacious, but transitory.

"I'd oughter been a girl," said De Peyster many times to himself, "but I wish she didn't want to make believe I am one when I ain't."

This was the nearest to a reproach that he allowed his loyal little heart to entertain, but a baffled, unchildlike look grew in his eyes as he watched his mates go off without him day after day.

In July a light epidemic of scarlet fever prevailed. The oldest inhabitants called it "walking scarlatina," the illness was so slight.

Mrs. Van Voort kept De Peyster in the house.

One day De Peyster caught it.

He regarded it rather in the nature of a festal occurrence than otherwise, for all the boys who had had it came up to see him, and, although they were not allowed to stand long, it cheered him amazingly to hear what they were doing, for he had constantly the hope that these new delights they told of one after another would not be on the forbidden list when he was out again.

But after awhile he did not seem to care whether they came or not and one day when told that Micky Daly waited below said languidly: "I guess I don't care about seeing him just now. I'm sorter tired, but tell him it'll be bully to have him come tomorrow."

But when tomorrow came no one was admitted, for he was tossing about in a weakening struggle with something he did not understand that those who watched by him realized only too well.

He heard a voice as if from very far away.

"You'd better tell him, doctor," it said. "I can't stand it to see him fight for his life like a little Trojan when it isn't any use."

The voice broke and then went on:

"He's a brave little chap, brave enough to face anything, and it isn't treating him square not to let him say goodby."

De Peyster opened his eyes. The doctor was standing over him.

"You don't have to tell me," said De Peyster, for he dimly saw that the old doctor's lips were quivering. "I—I guess—I know."

He felt for his mother's hand.

"I'd like to hear you sing just once first, mamsie," he said.

"There's a bully song one of the fellers taught me, 'One Wide River.' I've liked it specially much since—since it worried you to have me go in swimming."

His mother sobbed out a few lines, faltered and stopped.

A look of patient disappointment came over his face.

"Never mind, mamsie; you needn't," he gasped. "I'm going to see it, you know, so it don't matter. Won't the cool water feel good, though! And don't you worry, mamsie. Who's afraid? Father 'll find me!"

He lay quite still a moment; then he whispered:

"I would 'a' liked to try one more run with the fellers—Micky Daly was most always ahead. He's a peach sprinter. You tell him and Jimmy and the other fellers about me and the wide river. Tell 'em this time I—I ain't lubber last!"

And he slipped away to find that unknown river, the bravest of little pioneers.

Trouble In the Royal Palace.

The Shakespeare club of New Orleans used to give amateur theatrical performances that were distinguished for the local prominence of the actors. Once a social celebrity, with a gorgeous costume, as one of the lords in waiting had only four words to say, "The queen has swooned." As he stepped forward his friends applauded vociferously. Bowing his thanks, he faced the king and said in a very high pitched voice, "The swoon has queened."

There was a roar of laughter, but he waited patiently and made another attempt:

"The sween has cooned."

Again the walls trembled, and the stage manager said in a voice which could be heard all over the house, "Come off, you doggoned fool!"

But the ambitious amateur refused to surrender, and in a rasping falsetto as he was assisted from the stage he screamed, "The coon has sweened!"—Success Magazine.

A Wasted Exertion.

"You must excuse me for leaving you so abruptly the other day when I suddenly crossed the street."

"What was the trouble?"

"I thought I saw my wife coming, but it was only a creditor."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Just the Point.

Freddy does not often have an idea, but when he does he sticks to it tenaciously. For instance, he came out with this conundrum the other day with a glow of self conscious pride:

"Why is an eagle like a man?"

Everybody gave it up, when Freddy exclaimed with a chuckle:

"Because it is baldheaded."

"But," said somebody, "all eagles are not baldheaded."

"That's just it," responded Freddy. "Neither are all men baldheaded."

HOW A TRADITION BECAME A CERTAINTY

By DONALD CHAMBERLIN.

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When about 1830 in Virginia a little girl baby came to Colonel and Mrs. St. Leger the colonel, whose ancestors had come to Virginia from Georgia, insisted on naming his daughter after the latter state. Little Georgia was assigned a nurse, a slave named Rose. There are certain children who seem to have been transplanted from heaven, and Georgia was one of them. From the time she could toddle she was adored by her father's slaves, first of all by her "mammy." She was an only child and heir to one of the finest estates in the Old Dominion.

When Georgia became of a marriageable age she had many suitors, from among whom she chose Edgar Bedell, a young attorney. Bedell's ancestors had lived in the north from the time they had landed in America in 1690. After being graduated at college he had gone south to tutor the sons of a wealthy planter, meanwhile studying law at the University of Virginia. Colonel St. Leger made it a condition of his marriage with Georgia that he should remain in the south.

In a year a child was born to them. It lived only two days, but the brief stay of the little stranger in its passage from the known to the unknown made a great change for the young couple—that is, a great change occurred at that time, for before the mother appeared again to the world the father had left Virginia for his former home in the north, never to return. No one outside the manor house saw Mrs. Bedell for many months after her confinement, and when she resumed her position as a well woman she neither visited nor received any except the slaves on the plantation. Among these she went as before, but with a blighted look on her face. No cause was given for the change in her or the departure and continued absence of her husband. Whether her father and mother were cognizant of it no one knew, but it was evident that the blight, whatever it was, had fallen on them as well as on the young couple.

Ten years passed, and a new generation was growing up. Those hearing of the Bedell case, as it was called, naturally assumed that something to the discredit of one or the other had occasioned the separation of the wedded pair. But if such were the case nothing that gave color to this suspicion ever leaked out. Besides, those who had known Mrs. Bedell as Georgia St. Leger would not admit that anything discreditable could ever be attributed to her, and, as for her husband, a planter returning from the north reported him as a prominent and much esteemed member of the bar of New York.

Bedell had spoken in the highest terms of his wife, but did not even refer to the cause that had separated them. Mrs. Bedell never mentioned her husband, but did not give out the slightest hint that she had any cause to be dissatisfied with him.

Colonel St. Leger died and was soon followed by his wife, leaving Mrs. Bedell a large estate. She left its management to an overseer who had long enjoyed her father's confidence. This was noted by many who were hungry for her secret, they having been curious after her father's death to know if Bedell would not return, and manage the estate for her.

Mrs. Bedell died at the opening of the civil war. Her husband was present at her funeral. Many hoped that he would at last drop some hint as to the cause of his having left his wife, but he spoke never a word and as soon as the burial had taken place left for his home. He was followed the next day by a letter from an attorney stating that his wife had left him her entire estate.

Bedell never took possession of the property till four or five years later, when it was nearly worthless. He became a prominent Federal officer in the civil war and on one occasion encamped his troops on his own plantation. When he did take his inheritance he cut it up into small homes for those former slaves who remained upon it, giving each negro a title to his land. Bedell died ten years after the close of the war.

It seemed that with the death of the last person interested in the curious affair the secret would be buried forever. The very reverse of this occurred. Martha, Mrs. Bedell's "mammy," knew all and had been enjoined by her mistress to make it known after the death of all concerned should she live so long. Martha gave the explanation immediately after Bedell's death.

When the child of Mr. and Mrs. Bedell was born Rose was astonished to note certain marks upon it indicating that there was a trace in it of negro blood. She had endeavored to conceal these marks from the mother, but failed. Mrs. Bedell discovered them, and the effect upon her may be readily understood. The ancestry of the child's father was above reproach, but far back in the St. Leger family was a tradition that was made a certainty in the birth of this little innocent. Bedell had been willing and anxious to remain with his wife, but the effect upon her, taught by environment as well as by heredity to consider the black blood in her veins a taint, was far too serious to permit the sacrifice. She insisted on his never seeing her again, offering to assist him in securing a divorce, an offer he declined to accept.

EDMUND HOYLE.

The Man Who Came to Be an Authority on Card Games.

Why was Hoyle, and why should his name be used as a sort of guarantee of correctness so that it admits of no doubt or question? asks a writer in Munsey's, who goes on to answer the question.

Edmund Hoyle was an Englishman, born near Halifax in the year 1672. Nearly 150 years before his birth there had been invented a game of cards which was originally called "triumph." Its early history is obscure, as is the case with nearly all games at cards, but it was almost certainly English in its English game. The name was gradually shortened into "trump," and Shakespeare puns upon it in "Antony and Cleopatra."

"Trump" became very popular, but again the name was changed—it is not known precisely when—to "whisk," and later still to "whist," the word "trump" being retained to denote a card of the leading suit. Differences at play often led to violent disputes and sometimes even to duels, and it was left for Hoyle to establish all the points of the game with real authority.

Hoyle was of good family and was educated to be a barrister. His mind was essentially a legal mind—keen, judicious and logical. Living in London, he became greatly interested in the game of whist and gave to it the same thought and care which he would have given to an important case in court. Every evening he met with a regular company of whist players at the Crown coffee house in Bedford row, where some of the deepest players and most distinguished men about town used to gather.

Hoyle's acumen and the serious thought which he had given to the game made his opinion on any disputed point absolutely final. His name was noised abroad throughout all London, and a great many people used to come to him, begging him to give them lessons in whist. Finally, for the use of his pupils, he wrote a book, which he called "A Short Treatise on Whist," in which was embodied his notion of the correct way of playing the game.

Hoyle continued to give instruction in whist, and he also wrote books relating to other games at cards. The rules that he laid down were accepted by every one, so that when any dispute arose it was always decided "according to Hoyle." He lived to be ninety-seven years of age, dying in 1769.

It Had Not Hurt Him.

An English coachman, "one of the olden time," is likely to be an original character. The late Archbishop Tait was driven by one of whom Dr. Benson used to tell this good story:

One day a clergyman who called at the palace asked him whether he still had as much to do as ever. The answer was sublime:

"There's always a goodish bit doing, sir. But it has been a trifle easier since we took young Mr. Parry into the business." The Right Rev. Edward Parry had then recently been appointed bishop suffragan of Dover.

Another story he used to tell of a coachman will be new to many:

A gentleman living in the neighborhood of Addington, finding that the stablemen were not in the habit of attending church, spoke to his coachman about it.

"They ought to go," he said.

"That's just what I say myself, sir," was the rejoinder. "I says to them: 'Look at me. I go, and what harm does it do to me?'"

Bound to Be Ready.

The family were to leave town on the 2 o'clock train, so the mother said, as she was hurrying along the preparations:

"Now, children, get ready to go before luncheon. Don't leave anything to be done at the very last minute."

And the children said they would not. Luncheon ended, they hurried to their wraps and started. In the hall the mother said:

"Edward, you didn't brush your teeth."

"Yes, ma'am, I did."

"But you couldn't," she said. "You didn't have time. Why, you just this minute got up from the table."

"I know that," said Edward, "but we were in such a hurry that I brushed 'em before I ate."—New York Globe.

Ready For the End.

The rector and farmer were discussing the subject of pork one day, and the rector displayed considerable interest in a pen of good sized Berkshires. "Those pigs of yours are in fine condition, Tomkinson," he remarked. "Yes, sir, they be," replied the matter of fact farmer. "Ah, sur, if we was all of us only as fit to die as they be, sur, we'd do."—London News.

A SENSE OF HUMOR.

Oh, Yes, Every Man Is Absolutely Certain He Owns It.

A sense of humor is something which every man possesses in a superlative degree. Men will admit they have no reverence, they will ill treat their wives, outdo their neighbors—will own up, indeed, to every crime on the calendar, but not to being devoid of a sense of humor.

And, moreover, the sense of humor belonging to every man is invariably "keen." The most stolid, phlegmatic person, who never gets near enough to the point of a joke to throw his hat upon it, will tell you with tears in his eyes that he never would have been able to have lived through if it hadn't been for his sense of humor.

The worst offender, however, is the one who makes a business of exploiting this universally assumed trait. He takes you aside in a kind of joyous confidence.

"I couldn't begin to tell you," he declares, "all the funny things I see. I don't know why it is"—this with an air as if it were a heaven sent gift which he modestly is in no sense responsible for—"but anything funny—real funny—appeals to me. If I could only remember to set them down! But somehow I never think of it at the time."

He then proceeds to tell you of an incident that happened to himself—personally. You have heard the story perhaps ten years back—so far back, indeed, that you have almost forgotten it. But you wouldn't let your friend know that for the world.

When he has finished you laugh heartily. Long practice has trained you to laugh upon these occasions as if you really meant it, and you tell him that it is certainly one of the best things you have ever heard. Henceforth you avoid him. A burned victim dreads the man with a sense of humor.

Why is it that a man, modest in other respects, who, if he saved another's life would conceal it, boldly and unblushingly talks about his wonderful sense of humor without the slightest compunction?

Next to him comes the young girl of the family. Let us call her dear Mabel.

You've seen Mabel, of course?

"Do you know," her mother declares, "that child sees the funny side of everything! You just ought to hear her! No matter where she goes it is always the same! Why, last night we sat up listening to her while she entertained us with what she saw on the trolley car—just think of it—and—well, I thought I should certainly split with laughter. Mimic! Perfect! And you ought to see the poetry she wrote! She'd be awful mad if she knew I was showing it. I wanted her to send it to the papers, but I couldn't persuade her. Isn't it perfectly splendid? I suppose she ought not to be encouraged too much. I have a friend who's a writer, and he advised me to keep her down. But it does seem as if talent like that ought to be put to use. Oh, you just wait till you hear her! Such a sense of humor!"

You don't wait. You love dear Mabel—at a distance. You sneak away in the gloaming. You have been there before. Henceforth when Mabel heaves in sight you put your helm hard a port and wear ship.

It has often been shyly intimated—by bachelors—that women have no sense of humor.

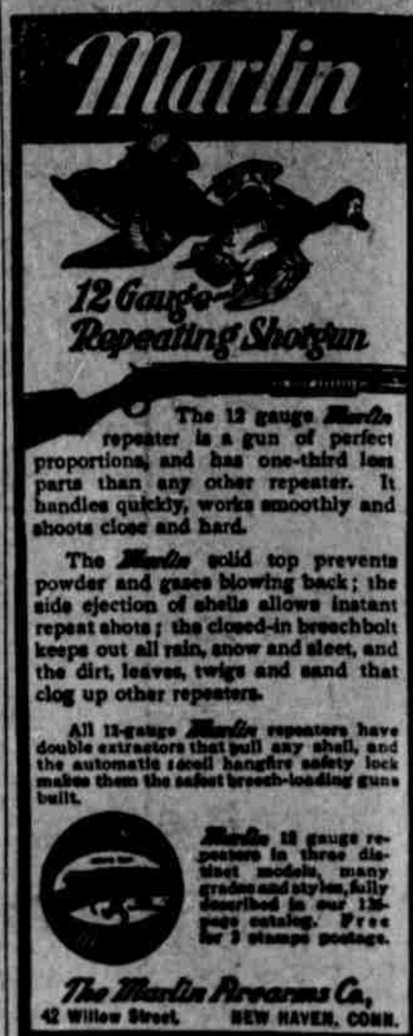
Yet think of the monumental joke every woman plays on a man when she marries him! — Success Magazine.

Throwing Stones at a Tiger.

Stone throwing is not without its uses in hunting the fiercest of game. At the first sound the tiger walked out and up the opposite bank and fell to a general discharge. As he lay motionless one of the guns suggested our walking across to measure him, but I demurred to measuring a tiger before I was sure he was dead and insisted on someone throwing stones at him first. A large stone hit the tiger, who got up and lurched rather than charged in our direction, with the savage coughing grunt—you cannot exactly describe it as a roar—which a tiger makes when charging. There was another general fusillade as he dipped into the ravine, then a moment of strained suspense as to whether he would be up our bank and into the middle of us. He had had enough, however.—Colonel A. Durant in Cornhill.

Didn't Like His Looks.

A would be author called on Mr. Fields one day at his office in the old time Boston publishing house of Ticknor & Fields. Evidently the young man did not like Mr. Field's appearance, for this was the conversation that took place: "Is this Mr. Fields?" "It is, sir." "Mr. James T. Fields?" "I am he." "Well, then, I'd like to see Mr. Ticknor!"



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